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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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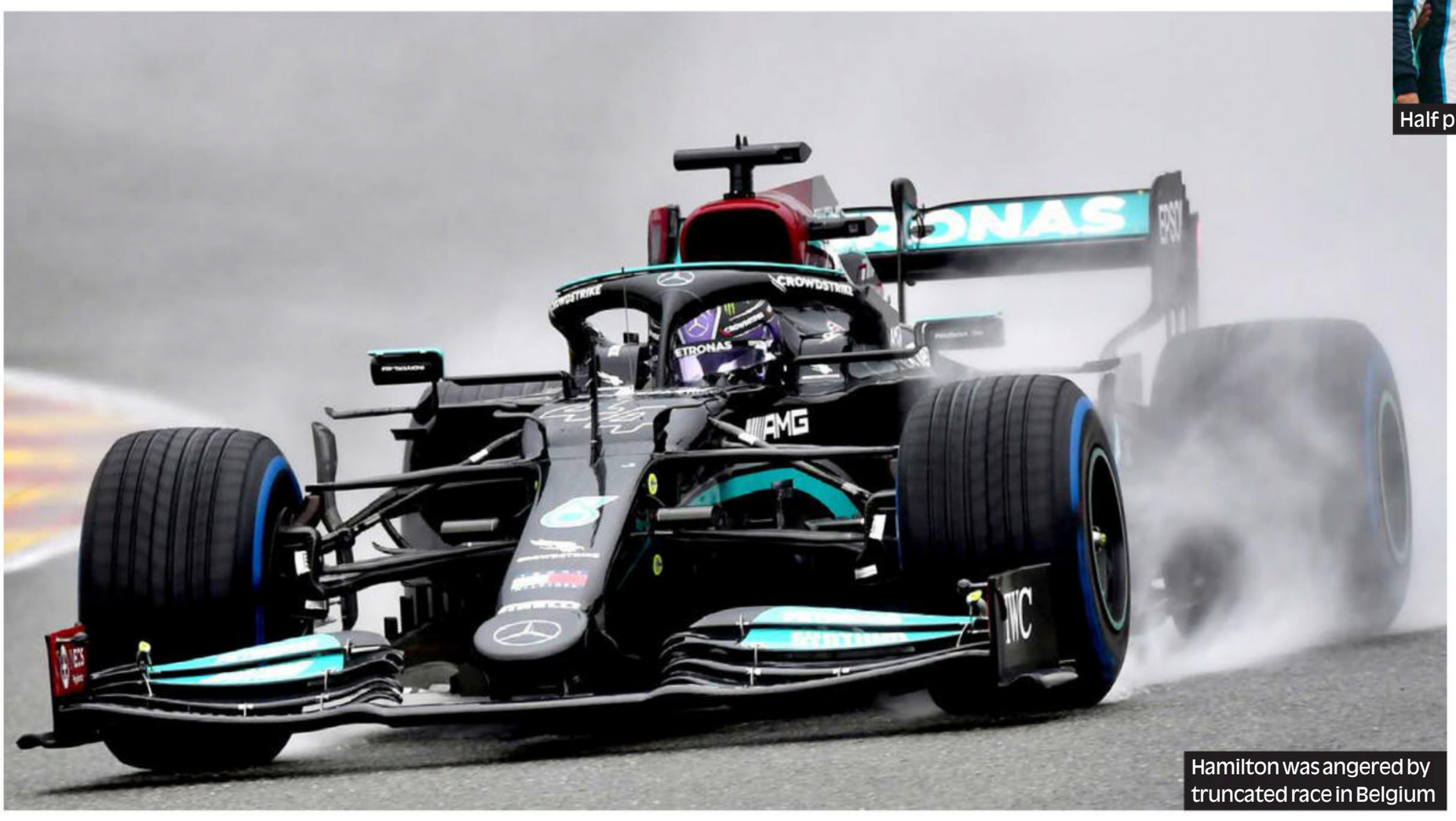
Readers' Q&A: The rising tin-top star gets his elbows out and answers your questions p20

Champion leads criticisms after points awarded following only two laps behind safety car

HAMILTON SLAMS BELGIAN GRAND PRIX "FARCE"



Hamilton was angered by truncated race in Belgium

Half points were awarded for podium finishers

By Graham Keilloh

Lewis Hamilton has labelled a day of chaos at the Belgian Grand Prix "a farce" after the result was declared after two safety car laps following hours of weather-related delay.

After persistent heavy rain, the field completed two laps behind the safety car, more than three hours after the intended start time. The result was then declared, effectively on qualifying order, with half points awarded. It was by far the shortest ever Formula 1 race.

Hamilton, one of several to be critical, said: "Today was a farce and the only people to lose out are the fans who have paid good money. We should have called it quits. Money talks."

Race director Michael Masi said the cars were sent out for the final time "to see what the conditions were like" and added: "We were all aiming for a window [in the weather] that we thought was there."

Red Bull's Max Verstappen was the winner with title-rival Hamilton of Mercedes third. Williams' British rising star George Russell took a sensational first podium in second place, after a stunning lap in sodden qualifying.

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THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT MOTORSPORT NEWS

BTCC REPORT

SUTTON STAKES HIS CLAIM FOR THE BTCC

Infiniti driver turns up the tin-top heat **p18**

INTERVIEW

BRITISH RACER WITH SIGHTS ON THE TOP

How rising star Ollie Bearman is making a big impact **p28**

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COMMENT

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The Formula 1 racers were all frustrated at the lack of a grand prix at Spa on Sunday

CALL THAT A GRAND PRIX?

There is not a lot you can do about the rain, but the anger and frustration that were created when the Belgian Grand Prix turned into a joke last weekend were entirely understandable.

It is ironic that perhaps the best chance to actually get some racing miles in was when the cars eventually lined up on the grid just ahead of the 1400hrs start time. The delays and prevarication by race control just allowed the rain to increase and persist. It was a bad call on the weather but there are many precedents for that (just ask Michael Fish).

The safety of the drivers is always paramount and that should be the only consideration when it comes to deciding whether to start a race or not. It wasn't about making sure the TV audience was satisfied, it was actually about driver safety and that is a issue that no-one should argue with – particularly on a weekend where there had already been some sizeable accidents at Eau Rouge (see my column, page 16).

Lewis Hamilton has a point when he says he felt for the fans. No end of camera shots of drunken Dutchmen dancing about in a Belgian forest while listening to some appalling Europop could make up for the fact they had been there to see a race and there wasn't one. They deserve to get their money back.

The frustration from a sporting point of view is the fact that the results were declared at all after less than 10 miles of following the safety car. Have I missed something here? Since when was it decided that valuable World championship points (and even the priceless half-points) that were awarded will be distributed when drivers haven't actually done any racing? No, that was not a race and therefore should have no impact whatsoever on the drivers' championship.

What is the problem with just cancelling the race? Ah yes, there is one, and it is financial. Lewis is right in saying it is all about the money – and there was a precedent for this with the Australian Grand Prix just as Covid hit at the start of 2020.

Think about the commercial contracts that demand that a race has to be started, a result declared and points awarded before the sponsors will pay out on their commitments in regard to the Belgian Grand Prix. That is why the F1 circus travelled all the way to Melbourne in March 2020, too – for fear of breaking the cash-boosting commercial contracts – and that is why those at Spa were so concerned about getting the F1 cars on track in impossible conditions. I am just being way too cynical?

Whatever the details, Formula 1 became a laughing stock on the international sporting stage last weekend. It simply wasn't good enough.

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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Ash Sutton increases his lead at the top of the BTCC standings

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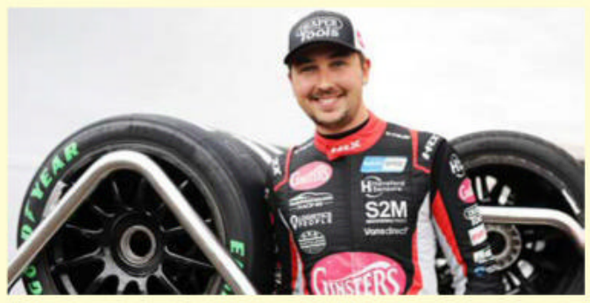
Tin-top ace gives his thoughts on the modern driver



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Itinerant racer making his mark

Ollie Bearman is splitting his programmes and winning everywhere

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FORMULA 1 REPORT: BELGIUM

Photos: Motorsport Images

Verstappen won the shortest F1 race ever

Red Bull racer kept the heat on in the World championship chase

SPLASHING AROUND AT SPA IN A FARCIAL GRAND PRIX

The rulebook was almost useless amid the deluge which struck in Belgium. By James Roberts

Red Bull repaired Sergio Perez's car, but there was no point

Three hours and 25 minutes after the Belgian Grand Prix was due to start, FIA race control declared the event over. Max Verstappen was adjudged the race winner and half points for the top 10 finishers were awarded. Yet the reality is that no racing took place at all.

Two formation laps, followed three hours later by two laps behind the safety car was enough for the FIA to declare a result. It was a facial state of affairs, but as the rain was so torrential, there was little alternative. Or was there?

The climate around the Belgian Ardennes is often referred to as fickle, but following on from the devastating floods in the region earlier in the summer, this was unlike anything anyone had ever seen at Spa during a grand prix weekend. It rained all day Sunday, with increasing intensity as the afternoon wore on.

The final outcome was a 'race' which will be classified in the record books as the shortest in the history of Formula 1. Verstappen was the winner with a race time of just 3m27.071s. He had covered one lap at a distance of 4.3 miles. That's because a race is counted back one lap after a red flag, but two racing laps are needed to declare a result. Confused? So was everyone on a day when the FIA rulebooks didn't have the answers to an unprecedented state of affairs.

While Friday was predominantly dry, rain set in for qualifying and fluctuated with intensity. In the final part, there was concern it was too wet to drive in. Lando Norris set off down Eau Rouge only for his McLaren to emerge from the other side minus its wheels. It was a big shunt for the British driver who was lucky to escape with just bruising, after undergoing an X-ray to check for a possible fracture to his left elbow.

After the stoppage, the star of qualifying was Williams' George Russell who excelled in the wet conditions to set the fastest time of the session and provisional pole position – only to be denied by Verstappen on his final lap.

Russell is driving with a belief and confidence that must surely be inspired by some good news about his career – but for the moment, everyone is keeping silent on a potential move to Mercedes next year. As it turned out, Russell's brilliant qualifying efforts were rewarded by his first-ever podium, thanks to how the events on Sunday played out.

With heavy rain continuing into race day, the drivers tentatively made their way to the grid. But at the end of the Kemmel Straight, Sergio Perez made a small mistake and slid wide into the tyre barriers. With his right-front wheel mangled, his race was over. Or so he thought.

As 1500hrs (local time) neared, the rain intensified and the FIA pushed back the start by 10 minutes. Then another ten. At 1525hrs two formation laps took place behind the safety car, only for the drivers to complain about a lack of visibility with the huge amount of spray. The start procedure was suspended and the cars lined up under a red flag in the pitlane. And everyone waited. And waited. And still the rain teemed down.

During this delay, Red Bull had got Perez's mangled car back to their garage and were initiating repairs. The FIA race director Michael Masi initially said the Mexican couldn't rejoin the race, but when it was pointed out by Red Bull that the race hadn't actually started yet, the stewards thumbed through the rulebook. Eventually, his RB16B was repaired and he was allowed to rejoin the event.

All eyes were on the radar – and the clock. Rules state that a race must be completed within three hours of the scheduled start time – but that was changed to suit the organisers. The hope was to try and find a break in the weather and at least have an hour of action. There is no provision to hold the race on a Monday, but with Zandvoort only a few hours up the road was it completely impossible?

At 1817hrs it was announced the 'race' would resume. Once again the safety car led the field around for two laps, but visibility was worse than it was before. The red flag emerged and guess what… a result declared.

Lewis Hamilton, who finished third, felt it was unfair and hoped all the fans who had patiently stood in the cold, windy rain all day would get their money back. Many had seen what they had come for - a Verstappen win – but no-one wished for it to be all over in just three minutes after waiting three hours. Might be time for a new rule book…

F1 RESULTS

BELGIAN GRAND PRIX
Laps: 1 **Track:** Spa-Francorchamps

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Max Verstappen	Red Bull-Honda	3m27.071s
2	George Russell	Williams-Mercedes	+1.995s
3	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	+2.601s
4	Daniel Ricciardo	McLaren-Mercedes	+4.496s
5	Sebastian Vettel	Aston Martin-Mercedes	+7.479s
6	Pierre Gasly	AlphaTauri-Honda	+10.177s
7	Esteban Ocon	Alpine-Renault	+11.579s
8	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari	+12.608s
9	Nicholas Latifi	Williams-Mercedes	+15.485s
10	Carlos Sainz	Ferrari	+16.166s

11 Fernando Alonso (Alpine-Renault) +20.590s; 12 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes) +22.414s; 13 Antonio Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo-Ferrari) +24.163s; 14 Lando Norris (McLaren-Mercedes) +27.110s; 15 Yuki Tsunoda (AlphaTauri-Honda) +28.329s; 16 Mick Schumacher (Haas-Ferrari) +29.507s; 17 Nikita Mazepin (Haas-Ferrari) +31.993s; 18 Kimi Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo-Ferrari) +36.054s; 19 Sergio Perez (Red Bull-Honda) 38.205s; 20 Lance Stroll (Aston Martin-Mercedes) +44.108s. **Drivers' Championship:** 1 Hamilton 202.5 points; 2 Verstappen 199.5; 3 Norris 113; 4 Bottas 108; 5 Perez 104; 6 Sainz 83.5. **Constructors' Championship:** 1 Mercedes 310.5 points; 2 Red Bull 303.5; 3 McLaren 169; 4 Ferrari 165.5; 5 Alpine 80; 6 AlphaTauri 72.

Russell's strong qualifying session helped him to a podium spot

Perez and Alonso tie up seats on the 2022 Formula 1 line-up

Two prized-seat occupants have been confirmed for 2022 as both Fernando Alonso and Sergio Perez have been confirmed at their current teams for another season.

Two-time World champion Alonso had a 'one-plus-one' deal with Alpine in which the option for a second year has been taken up.

Meanwhile Red Bull has committed with Perez for another season which has ended any hope for former racers Pierre Gasly or Alex Albon to return the Milton Keynes squad.

Team boss Christian Horner said that with a new set of regulations planned for next season, it was important for Red Bull to have continuity in its driver line-up and to draw on the experience that Perez has with over 200 race starts already under his belt.

"His integration into the team has been seamless and Checo will play an integral role in helping the team navigate the transition with new rules," said Horner.

Russell writes a modern chapter in Williams' history of the Brits

George Russell has become the first British driver to score a podium for Williams in 25 years. Not since Damon Hill clinched the World championship in Japan in 1996 has home-grown talent lifted a trophy at a Formula 1 race for the British outfit.

Russell's second place at the Belgian GP was also notable as it was the first front-row start for a British driver racing at Williams also since Hill at Suzuka in 1996.

Russell is tipped to leave Williams for Mercedes next year, but all parties are refusing to comment on the plan.

"It was strange to be on the podium after no racing laps, but I'll take it after we felt we had only the 17th fastest car for the race," said the Norfolk-born racer.

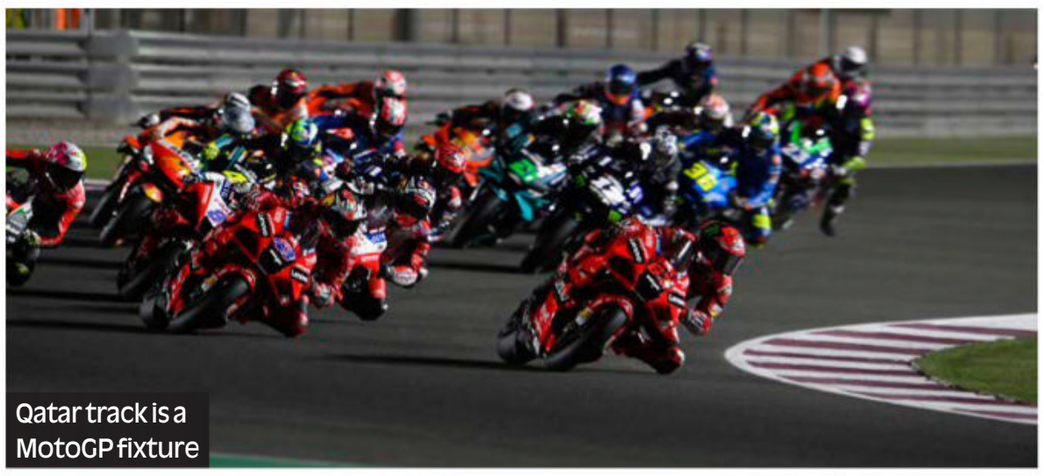
The team's last runners-up finish in an individual grand prix was taken in 2014 when Felipe Massa was second in Abu Dhabi.

RACING NEWS

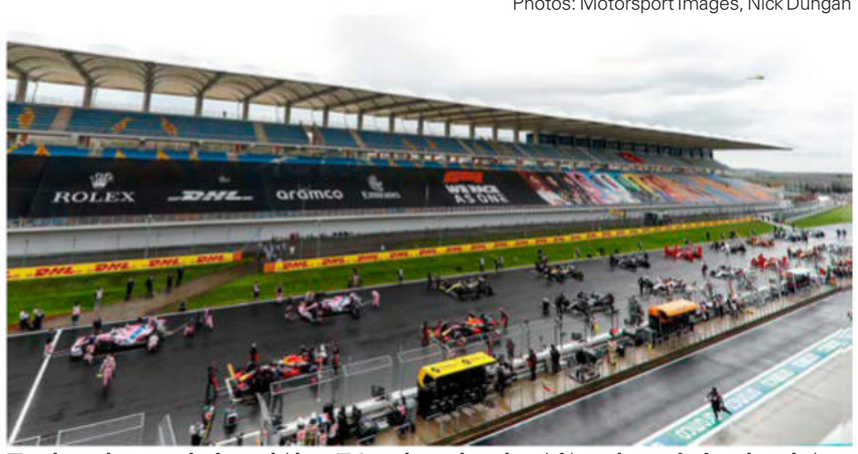
QATAR SET FOR F1 DEBUT ON REVISED AUTUMN SCHEDULE

Modified calendar is unveiled with total races for the year reduced to 22 and a vacant slot expected to be filled by the Losail circuit

Photos: Motorsport Images, Nick Dungan



Qatar track is a MotoGP fixture



Turkey has rejoined the F1 calendar, but its place is in doubt

By Graham Keilloh

Formula 1's disrupted schedule for this autumn has taken new shape with revised dates unveiled for a 22-race season and a vacant slot expected to be filled by Qatar.

The revised calendar means F1 is set for one fewer race in total this year than the planned 23.

The Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka was recently cancelled due to Covid, and Turkey has moved into its October 10 date.

However the Turkey round is itself in doubt as the country remains on the UK's Covid 'red list'. Mugello, the Italian venue that hosted its first F1 race on 2021's heavily Covid-disrupted calendar, is a replacement candidate.

The Mexican Grand Prix is moved back a week to November 7 on the new schedule to start a triple-header including Brazil on November 14 and a 'TBC' round on November 21. Reports state that, once a deal is concluded, that round will be at Qatar's Losail circuit, a regular MotoGP venue set for its F1 debut.

F1 president Stefano Domenicali said: "The pandemic continues to present the season with challenges but we have proven we can adapt and we are confident we can deliver a record-breaking 22 races this year despite a global pandemic."

REVISED REMAINING 2021 CALENDAR

Formula 1

DATE	COUNTRY	VENUE
Sep 5	Netherlands	Zandvoort
Sep 12	Italy	Monza
Sep 26	Russia	Sochi
Oct 10	Turkey	Istanbul Park
Oct 24	USA	Austin
Nov 7	Mexico	Mexico City
Nov 14	Brazil	Interlagos
Nov 21	TBC	
Dec 5	Saudi Arabia	Jeddah
Dec 12	Abu Dhabi	Yas Marina

SUTTON WIN BOOSTS BTCC TITLE AIMS

British Touring Car Championship points leader Ash Sutton says he isn't getting carried away despite winning at Thruxton on Sunday, a venue he described as his bogey track.

After finishing fifth in the opening race, the Laser Tools Racing Infiniti driver overtook rival Josh Cook to win the second and was 10th in the finale to push his advantage at the top of the standings to 30 points ahead Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N man Tom Ingram.

The reigning champion said: "Coming into the weekend I had it mapped out that race one was about getting a solid result and losing some success ballast, then we could really go after it in race two. We managed it perfectly."

After achieving his aim, Sutton says that the four-meeting run-in will play to his strengths.

"Overall it has been another mega weekend," he added. "I've come away from Thruxton extending my points lead and picking up another win at what is probably the only bogey track for me and the car left on the calendar.

"We go to Croft next – which I love – and the aim will be the same once again; to either maintain or extend my lead in the championship."

As well as leading the overall points standings, Sutton is 28 points clear of Ingram in the hunt for the Independents Trophy.

DOOHAN DENTS HAUGER'S F3 LEAD WITH DOUBLE SPA TRIUMPH

Jack Doohan took a sizable bite out of Dennis Hauger's FIA Formula 3 championship lead with two wins from three at a wet Spa-Francorchamps while Hauger had a frustrating meeting.

Trident's Doohan across the weekend reduced his deficit to Prema's Hauger at the table top from 63 points to 25.

The Australian's strong meeting was set up by taking his first FIA F3 pole while Hauger could only get 14th place in the wet. Doohan converted this to victory in the Sunday-morning feature race, again run in the wet, holding off Victor Martins' challenge. Martins took the lead briefly around the outside of Pouhon but gave the place back after putting all four wheels off in the manoeuvre. Hauger salvaged eighth place.

Doohan had already won a disrupted second sprint race, again starting from pole on its reversed grid. In initially damp-but-drying conditions, Doohan kept at arm's length chasing team-mate David Schumacher. The race ended with more rain, gathering dark and two safety car periods, ending under caution after Amaury Cordeel and Calan Williams crashed at Raidillon. Hauger finished ninth.

Campos Racing's Lorenzo Colombo dominated the soaking opening sprint race for his freshman FIA F3 win.

Doohan doubled up in Belgium

F1 champ Button will be back racing in the UK

BUTTON TO MAKE HISTORIC RACING DEBUT AT GOODWOOD REVIVAL

Jenson Button will make his historic racing debut at this month's Goodwood Revival, competing in a Jaguar E-type and an AC Cobra.

In the September 17-19 event on the Goodwood circuit, Button will compete first in its Friday-evening sunset Stirling Moss Memorial Trophy for late-1950s and early-1960s GT cars. The 2009 Formula 1 champion's E-type therein will be prepared and run by RJN Motorsport, the team that Button partners with for his Team Rocket RJN GT squad.

Button will then return on Sunday afternoon in a 1963 AC Cobra for the prestigious one-hour, two-driver Royal Automobile Club TT Celebration for closed-cockpit GTs. The race will also be broadcast by ITV.

In both races Button will be partnered by experienced endurance racer Alex Buncombe. Button last raced in the UK in last year's British GT championship Silverstone 500 season closer when he competed in a Team Rocket RJN McLaren 720S alongside Buncombe's brother Chris.

W SERIES DRIVERS ESCAPE INJURY IN EAU ROUGE PILE-UP

Six W Series drivers escaped injury after being involved in a violent accident at Eau Rouge-Raidillon during Spa-Francorchamps' qualifying session.

Amid drizzle Briton Sarah Moore lost the rear of her car, then several others behind followed suit. The machines of Moore, Ayla Agren, Belen Garcia, Abbie Eaton, Beitske Visser and Fabienne Wohlwend piled up in the barriers, with Eaton sent airborne and Visser rolling.

All six were taken to the circuit's medical centre, then Agren and Visser were transferred to hospital. Both were discharged that evening but neither raced.

Racing director Dave Ryan said: "Spa is always quite eventful and today certainly proved to be for us. The cars have stood up unbelievably well."

KIMILAINEN CHARGES IN SPA WET TO W SERIES WIN

Emma Kimilainen put in a stunning charge to win a sodden Spa W Series race while second-placed Jamie Chadwick extended her championship lead.

Kimilainen, starting fourth, quickly dispatched Caitlin Wood after the cars were released after starting behind the safety car, then two laps later at Blanchimont moved past Alice Powell who was struggling for grip.

The Finn then demolished the gap to leader Chadwick, closing by three seconds in one lap, before moving past the Briton on the outside of Fagnes with four laps left. Kimilainen moved eight seconds clear by the end.

Powell could only finish fourth, meaning Chadwick's advantage over her at the table top has grown from one point to seven.

Chadwick said: "I had no answer to Emma. She was really impressive and just seemed to be able to use better parts of the track for the tyres. It's still a good day for the championship."

Kimilainen was in a class of one in rainy Spa W Series contest

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ROSBERG AMONG SUPPORTERS HELPING BRABHAM RAISE OVER £10K FOR MND

Formula 1 World champion has personal message to MND sufferer Williams at star-studded charity karting race at Thruxton that is hoped to become an annual event

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Motorsport Images

Racers raised cash for MND

By Graham Keilloh

Nico Rosberg was among those supporting Le Mans winner David Brabham's Karting4MND charity event at Thruxton Kart Centre last week that raised over £10,000 for the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

Rosberg sent a personal message to MND sufferer Gideon Williams, brother of Racing4Charity co-founder Bill, for Racing4Charity's first fundraising event in a decade. As Motorsport News went to press upwards of £10,000 was raised with more fundraising to come during Thruxton's British Touring Car Championship weekend including a Saturday-night memorabilia auction.

The two-hour kart race was staged in honour of Gideon Williams and in memory of Neil Cunningham who lost his life to MND in 2016.

Brabham told MN: "[It was] overall a great success, we've raised good money, we had some nice messages from different people. The energy in the whole place was great. People that don't race normally got a chance to race against the people that do and everyone had a great time.

"Everybody was really positive hoping there would be another event in the future and Bill's very keen on it being an annual event. This is the start of some new things to come [from Racing4Charity]."

Team Bennie and the Jets – made up of Ben Davis, Tylor Ballard, James Duncan and Paul Streather – won the inaugural race and were first Gideon Williams Trophy recipients. Streather got the Neil Cunningham Trophy for fastest lap.

You can donate via the Karting4MND JustGiving page justgiving.com/fundraising/bill-williams2 or you can text MNDKART to 70085 to donate £5, MNDKART10 to donate £10 and MNDKART20 for £20.

The winners of the first charity karting race at Thruxton

WICKHAM SUPPORTS THE MND CAMPAIGN

Prolific team boss John Wickham has explained in a message to last week's Karting4MND charity event his experience of Motor Neurone Disease that he was diagnosed with in 2019.

Wickham co-owned the Spirit Formula 1 team, managed Audi's British Touring Car Championship outfit plus Bentley's 2003 1-2 finishing Le Mans 24 Hours effort, and ran the A1GP series. He also was competitions director of event host Thruxton in the 1970s.

Wickham sent a message to the Motor Neurone Disease Association fundraiser for co-host David Brabham to read out at the drivers' briefing. Wickham confirmed his illness started in 2018's summer and he is now unable to speak or swallow, requires hearing aids and needs assistance to perform basic daily functions. He added that the MND Association has been helpful and supportive with information and practical assistance.

Brabham, who finished second for Wickham's Bentley team in 2003's Le Mans, told MN: "John has been around the paddock for a long time; someone that's not only well-known but well-liked. [His letter] was very touching and very impactful as he described his symptoms and the fact that his body's shutting down but his mind is still very active and very aware."

Wickham has contracted MND

Formula Student has backing

JUNQUEIRA BACKS TEAM BRAZIL SCHOLARSHIP

Leo Rufino has secured a place in Formula Ford

Three-time CART championship runner-up Bruno Junqueira has expressed support of the Team Brazil Scholarship that seeks to give promising young Brazilian drivers an opportunity in Europe.

Junqueira, who won the Formula 3000 championship in 2000 and missed out on a Williams F1 drive for that season in a shootout with Jenson Button, has assisted the drivers involved with the scholarship by giving advice on how to attract sponsors.

Team Brazil Scholarship recently selected 17-year-old Marcas e Pilotos and Copa Shell driver Leo Rufino as its second finalist competing for a drive in this year's Formula Ford Festival.

Junqueira said: "The motorsport market in Europe is much broader than in Brazil. I would definitely try there, if you go there, to run the Formula Ford Festival for example and win or be in the top 10, you put your name there and start to tread a path. The only advantage of racing in Brazil is that you get Brazilian sponsorship.

"[The scholarship] is a great opportunity for drivers at the start of their careers. Currently many drivers are skipping these steps and not racing in lower categories [and going] straight to high levels already, but most drivers are not ready for the higher levels."

BEARMAN BACK IN GB3 FOR DONINGTON SEASON CLOSER

Rising star Ollie Bearman is set to make his latest appearance in the GB3 championship in next month's Donington Park season-closer.

Bearman has completed GB3 rounds this season with Fortec when his ADAC and Italian Formula 4 schedules allow, and has been a consistent pacesetter. He cannot compete in next weekend's Oulton Park round but intends to return for the finale.

He told Motorsport News: "I can't be there for Oulton Park, I'm actually in Red Bull Ring [Italian F4 round], so I think I'll jump in for Donington. I've done the most driving around Donington [among UK tracks] so we can be particularly strong there.

"At Snetterton I missed out on double pole and [I did the same] at Silverstone. Both times it was changing conditions and I'm sure it'll be the same at Donington because of the time of year. So the aim is always to be on pole position; we have the car to do it."

Bearman's Donington appearance will form part of a busy Autumn where he is set for three Italian plus three ADAC triple-header F4 meetings through September and October.

●*Bearman feature: p28-29*

Bearman is plotting a return to GB3 in October

McLAREN APPLIED TO SUPPORT TWO FORMULA STUDENT TEAMS

McLaren Applied is to provide technical support for two Formula Student teams, Joanneum Racing and TU Graz Racing affiliated respectively with Fachhochschule Joanneum college and Graz University of Technology.

McLaren Applied – part of the McLaren Group that makes data science applications across a variety of industries – chose to support the two teams due to their advancements in the educational and racing aspects of their programmes and their strong performance in Formula Student events. Both teams are focusing on electric powertrains, a core area for McLaren Applied.

McLaren Applied's motorsport director Matthias Dank said: "Motorsport has several feeder series to bring driver talent into the premium leagues of professional racing, however there are fewer routes to encourage engineers and technicians into the sport. We are very excited to be part of that process and support with our hardware, tools and software."

Photos: Joe Hayes/Kindful Creative, Jakob Ebrey, Dan Bathie,

Thompson was back in racing action in Minis

BTCC man hasn't raced since Croft crash in late 2020

THOMPSON LOOKS TO BTCC AFTER SUCCESSFUL MIGHTY MINI COMEBACK

The 25-year-old took pole and victory on his post-crash return at Brands Hatch and now he is aiming for more BTCC and Mighty Mini action in 2022

By Graham Keilloh

Bobby Thompson hopes his successful return to racing at the recent Mini Festival is his first step towards a 2022 British Touring Car Championship return plus more Mighty Minis action.

The double header at Brands 10 days ago was Thompson's first racing since his BTCC Croft crash last October where he sustained concussion in a high-speed barrel roll in his Trade Price Cars RacingAudi S3.

Thompson in only his second day in the Mini immediately took pole at Brands then won the opening race, though retired from race two with a broken driveshaft. He followed in Jeff Smith's footsteps who also raced Mighty Minis after a sizeable 2017 BTCC Croft accident.

Thompson told Motorsport News: "That's the plan, touring cars next year. Who knows, [next year] if the touring cars is secured I'll probably look at doing this [Mighty Minis] as well. There's been a few talks of getting my dad [Paul] back in one of these and me doing it with him.

"I'm absolutely going back to enjoying my racing and having so much fun compared to the pressure I'm usually under on a race weekend.

"It's been a hard start of this year and end of last year with working on my brain and getting it back healthy again to go racing and start coaching people again in the day job. This is the first time I've drove the car in anger and I'm happy with the result.

"[I'm physically] 100%, I'm ready to go, the hunger's back and my mindset's the same."

BRITISH GT CHAMP JONES OVERCOMES DAMAGE FOR LE MANS PODIUM

British GT champion Nick Jones overcame car damage in claiming class podium in the one-off Porsche Sprint Challenge France contest ahead of the recent Le Mans 24 Hours.

The 2018 British GT4 Pro-Am champion on the Saturday morning before the famous 24-hour race's start had with Team Parker Racing a rare opportunity to race on the Circuit de la Sarthe, opened to only amateur drivers for the first time.

In the packed all-Porsche event, Jones qualified fourth and finished fifth overall, in both placing second in the 911 GT3 R class.

Jones said: "I'd got some damage at Turn 2 from another car, so I didn't have any of my front aero as the dive planes had come off. I didn't even mind having the damage, I was just glad I could finish. I did think 'oh here we go, same old luck,' but it's all good – I lost a few places but then made them back up.

Jones added he could have finished even higher had the race not finished under the safety car due to barrier damage: "I thought we might get one racing lap but then I saw the angle grinder. It was a shame because again, we were getting faster and faster."

Jones took fifth overall in rare opportunity to race at Le Mans

RAM MERCEDES IN THE PINK

The newly liveried brightly coloured RAM Mercedes-AMG GT3 broke cover at Oulton Park last week. The car made its debut at last weekend's GT World Challenge Europe Sprint Cup event as well as will be raced at Oulton's forthcoming British GT round. Asian Le Mans Series champion Kevin Tse will race the car at both meetings: at Brands he was partnered by AMG factory driver Adam Christodoulou while at Oulton Tse will be joined by British Touring Car Championship race-winner Tom Onslow-Cole.

IN BRIEF

New marshal secretary

John Edwards has been appointed as British Motorsports Marshals Club's national secretary following the recent application process. Edwards sits on the north-west committee as membership secretary and is currently graded as an incident officer. He will shadow outgoing secretary Paul Wiltshire until the ratification of Edwards' position at December's National AGM.

Parkin appointed

Rod Parkin will from November 2 be new chair of the British Motor Sports Training Trust, a UK registered charity to improve safety and volunteer officials' training for Motorsport UK-regulated competition. Parkin's extensive experience includes being an International FIA Steward, a member of the FIA Historic Commission and, since 1977, Rally Yorkshire clerk of the course.

Morris gets more Lambo action

GT STAR MORRIS RETURNS TO TRACK

British GT champion Seb Morris returns to competitive action this weekend at the Nurburgring after being recruited by Leipert Motorsport for the remainder of this Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe season.

The 25-year-old Welsh racer will, in addition to the Nurburgring, race in Misano's late-October season finale plus the prestigious World Final at the same Italian circuit on the immediately following weekend. That event features the premier drivers and teams from Lamborghini Super Trofeo categories across the globe and Morris is aiming for victory.

Morris already competes with Leipert in the 24H Series, where he took an overall podium finish in May at Hockenheim on his category debut. In Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe he will partner German Sebastian Balthasar in a Lamborghini Huracan Evo, not dissimilar to the Huracan GT3 Morris races in 24H.

Morris said: "It's always a pleasure and an honour to drive for such a prestigious automotive brand and to race for Leipert who are a fantastic team and never seem to miss a beat. I have my engineer from the 24H Series with me and I've only heard good things about Sebastian Balthasar. I will do my absolute utmost to ensure Leipert gets the results we think we can achieve."

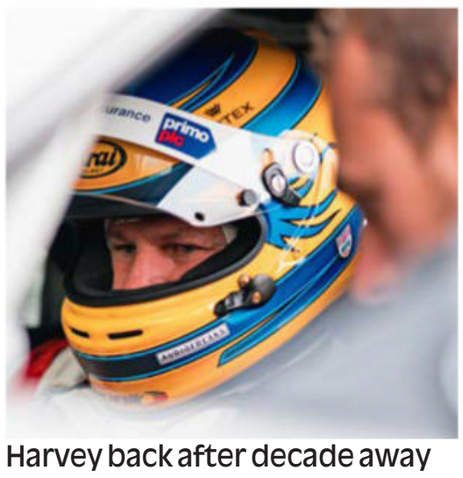
HARVEY RETURNS TO PORSCHE RACING IN SPRINT CHALLENGE BTCC SUPPORT

British Touring Car champion Tim Harvey returned to Porsche competition after a decade away last weekend in the Porsche Sprint Challenge GB BTCC support races at Thruxton.

Harvey made his Sprint Challenge category debut as a guest in the Pro category with Team Parker Racing. He holds the record for most Porsche Carrera Cup GB wins and won the championship in 2008 and '10. He last raced in the championship in 2011.

Harvey said: "I can't thank Porsche enough for this opportunity as I've wanted to race in Sprint Challenge GB since it was first announced and I tried the car briefly at the Silverstone taster day in 2019.

"I may only have raced historic cars for the last few years, but I spend many days behind the wheel of a Porsche either on trackdays or driving my own cars, so my passion for driving and Porsche in particular is immense."


Harvey back after decade away

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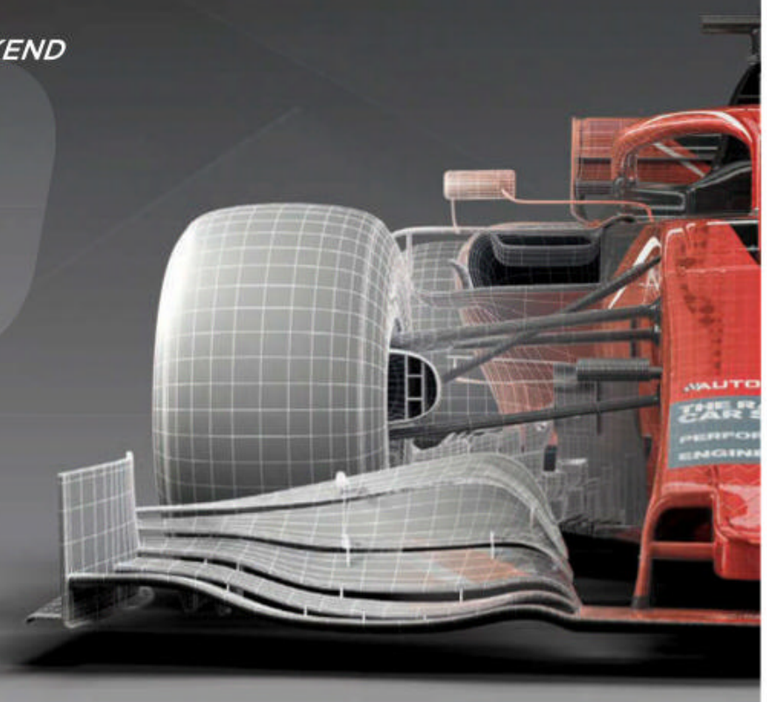

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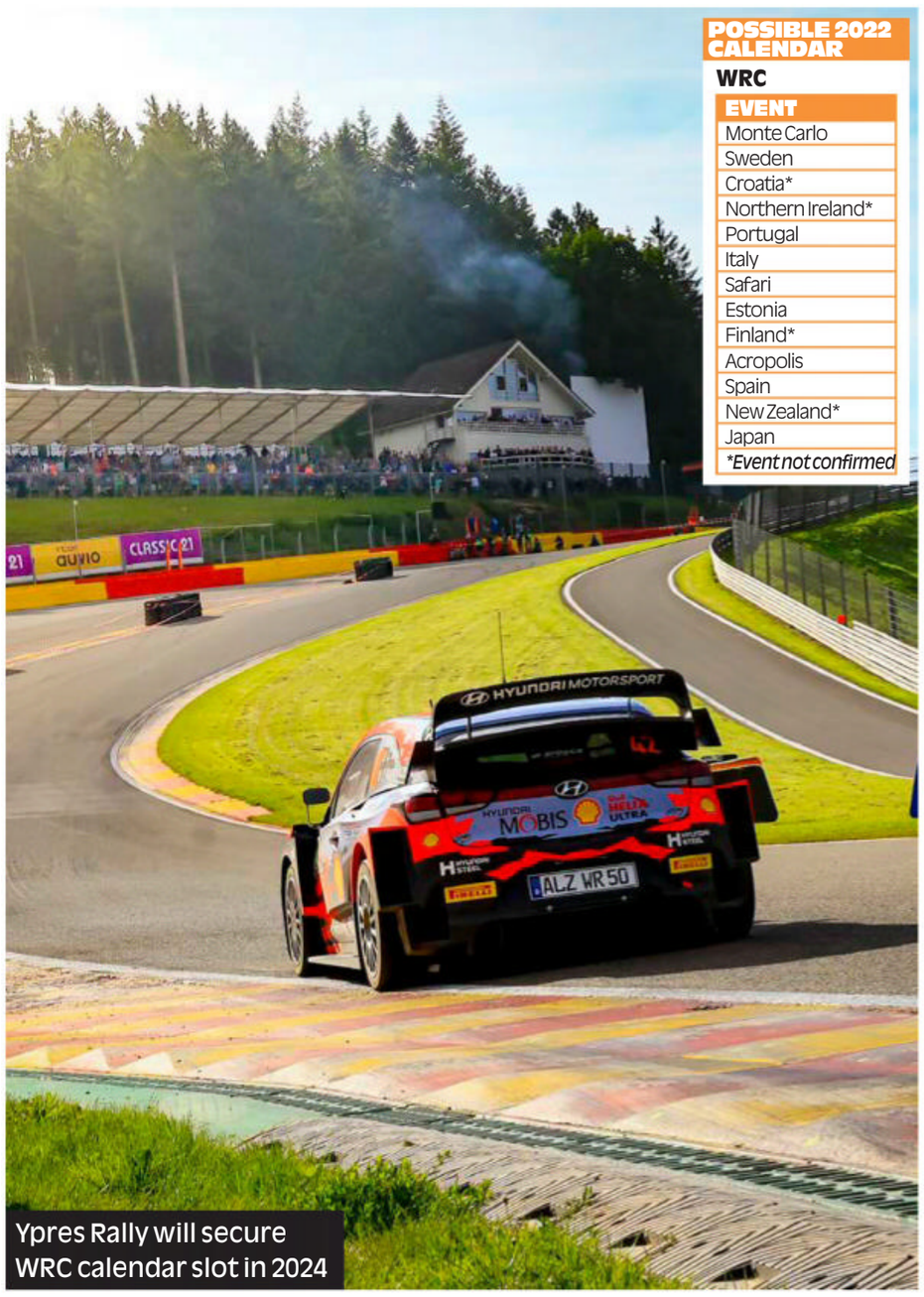
RALLY NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, ERC, M-Sport

YPRES DELAY COULD MEAN GOOD NEWS FOR GB'S WRC HOPES

Belgian event secures slot but leaves an opening for Northern Irish round



Ypres Rally will secure WRC calendar slot in 2024

POSSIBLE 2022 CALENDAR

WRC

EVENT
Monte Carlo
Sweden
Croatia*
Northern Ireland*
Portugal
Italy
Safari
Estonia
Finland*
Acropolis
Spain
New Zealand*
Japan

**Event not confirmed*

By Graham Lister

Rally Northern Ireland's hopes of a World championship round in 2022 have been boosted by the Ypres event that took its place on this year's calendar.

Motorsport News understands the Ypres Rally has been offered a WRC return following its debut appearance last month – but not until 2024.

For the next two seasons, the Belgian rally will be back on the European championship schedule for the first time since 2016, a move orchestrated by WRC Promoter, which is taking over the promotional rights of the ERC at the end of this year.

The Ypres Rally had been vying for one of the four available slots on next year's WRC calendar but its expected return to the ERC will boost Rally Northern Ireland's prospects.

Bobby Willis, the NI event promoter, was not able to provide any comment when MN contacted him, but sources suggest the Belfast round is edging closer to a WRC debut in 2022 with the Ypres Rally's ERC status from next year one fewer hurdle for it to overcome.

A source said: "Nothing is confirmed but Croatia, New Zealand, Finland and Northern Ireland are the four [additional] rallies. Ypres will be back in the ERC for two years and will then get another WRC round [in 2024]."

Rally Northern Ireland was the planned UK round of the World championship for 2021 but funding issues resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic led to the Ypres Rally getting called up as a replacement.

Ypres hosted the WRC for the first time last month with two days based around Ypres in northwest Flanders and the final day at the Spa-Francorchamps circuit 180 miles to the east.

Rally Northern Ireland going ahead is still dependent on government support, however, but there is growing support from within the WRC hierarchy for the event due to the importance of the UK market.

Organisers of the Ypres Rally have yet to comment on the event's status for the 2022 season and beyond.

Ireland could host a round of the World Rally Championship again

Zlin organisers: hopeful

CZECHS CHASING A SLOT ON WRC'S TOP-FLIGHT CALENDAR

The Czech Republic has entered the race for a World Rally Championship event in the future.

Barum Czech Rally Zlin, the country's flagship European championship round, ran for the 50th time last week with ACCR president, Jan Stovicek, hosting FIA presidential candidate and World Council member Mohammed Bin Sulayem during the weekend.

Stovicek even co-drove Bin Sulayem on selected stages in an M-Sport Poland-built Ford Fiesta Rally3 and is understood to have shown no secret of his desire for a WRC future when quizzed by local reporters.

Barum Czech Rally Zlin ran as a candidate WRC event in 2005 and a MN source in Czech Republic said: "The federation have seen countries like Croatia and Estonia join the WRC and they consider they have a better event. Mohammed Bin Sulayem was meant to take part on the Barum Rally in 1989 but never started and always said he would come back. But I don't think his visit is just for that reason."

Bin Sulayem, the 14-time Middle East rally champion, said: "There are many reasons [why I come here]. I'm a rally person, I got the invitation to see not just the rally but this beautiful country. Good memories come when I drive rally and motorsport shapes my current life."

SUNINEN'S DEPARTURE FROM M-SPORT OPENS DOOR FOR BREEN

Craig Breen's switch to M-Sport moved a step closer last week when Teemu Suninen announced he was leaving the Cumbria outfit with immediate effect.

Finn Suninen, 27, has been part of the M-Sport fold since 2017, but has struggled for form this season with a high-speed crash on the opening stage of the Monte Carlo Rally in January not helping his cause.

Suninen's car-sharing arrangement with Adrien Fourmaux, who has been able to bring Red Bull funding to M-Sport, has led to a mixed programme of World Rally Car and Rally2 drives for Suninen and has resulted in a notable drop-off in confidence, although he insisted last month he remained fully motivated.

Suninen has said goodbye to M-Sport after "thorough analysis"

But a statement from his management team "after thorough analysis" confirmed Suninen has "decided to withdraw his cooperation with M-Sport Ford World Rally Team. This decision has been communicated to M-Sport, and has been agreed upon with them. The decision will take effect immediately. Thereby Suninen's last rally with M-Sport was Ypres."

Suninen added: "It's time for us to say goodbye to M-Sport. I'm grateful that I had a chance to be one of the WRC team drivers for several years. It has been a journey full of learning with great moments. However, nothing lasts forever and we have now decided it's time to go on to new challenges."

M-Sport was due to issue a statement in response to Suninen's announcement after Motorsport News had gone to press, while Suninen's management confirmed details of its client's WRC plans will follow soon.

Suninen had been due to contest next week's Acropolis Rally in an M-Sport Fiesta Rally2.

The entry is expected to be withdrawn, while Suninen's departure will free up a Ford Fiesta WRC for Rally Finland, which had been on Suninen's original M-Sport schedule.

Breen's chances of driving the new Ford Puma have increased

HOW THE FINN'S EXIT HELPS THE BRITISH ISLES HOPEFULS

While there was no guarantee that Teemu Suninen would have been part of M-Sport's Rally1 attack in 2022, his departure takes one rival out of the equation for Craig Breen.

The Irishman is expected to be unveiled as an M-Sport driver under a two-year agreement this month although there is no official word from either party that a deal has been done.

Last week, one service park insider suggested that Breen, 31, would test the team's hybrid-based Ford Puma Rally1 after next week's Acropolis Rally, which Breen and co-driver Paul Nagle are expected to attend to undertake the reconnaissance.

Suninen leaving M-Sport could also strengthen Frenchman Adrien Fourmaux and Brit Gus Greensmith's prospects of being included in the team's Rally1 line-up.

Both drivers are taking part in M-Sport's Rally1 testing programme and will contest the Acropolis Rally in Fiesta WRCs.

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

RALLY NEWS

Kopecky took record win

KOPECKY SAYS CAIS DESERVED ZLIN WIN

Record-breaking Barum Czech Rally Zlin victor Jan Kopecky called his young countryman Erik Cais to show his support after the 22-year-old crashed out of the lead with just 10 miles left to run.

Cais, 22, moved in front on the infamous Pindula night stage on Saturday following an inspired run through the mud-coated forest-based test.

He had managed to build a lead of 20.2s over the veteran Skoda ace Kopecky as they entered the rally-closing Majova stage on Sunday afternoon. All of that hard work was undone in an instant, however, when he lost control in a slippery section and rolled into retirement.

"I expected there would be not so much slippy and it slipped from the left rear and there was no way back," the desolate Zlin resident Cais explained. "I hit something in the ditch and it broke the wheel. We rolled one time. I apologise to everyone."

Although it was an inherited victory, there was still a thunderous reception at the finish for local hero Kopecky as he extended his record of outright wins in Zlin.

Nine-time victor Kopecky said Cais "deserved the win" before calling up his rival to offer his support while Cais was still stranded on the stage, which had to be abandoned due to Cais's Ford Fiesta blocking the road.

Andreas Mikkelsen finished second in his regular Toksport-entered Skoda Fabia Rally 2 and now heads the ERC standings by 29 points. The Norwegian's nearest rival in the title race, Alexey Lukyanuk, held a one-point advantage before the event but was unable to start following a testing crash before the event.

Ireland's Callum Devine was the best Zlin rookie in seventh.

BLACK AND LEPLEY PLAN BTRDA BOUNCEBACKS ON WOODPECKER

Title contenders relishing the prospect of BTRDA action as title battle heats up

Photos: William Neill, Jakob Ebrey, Howie Fowler, Kevin Money

Black is ready for showdown

By Luke Barry

Callum Black and George Lepley are both in fighting mood ahead of this weekend's Woodpecker Stages, the third round of the BTRDA Rally Series.

Elliot Payne leads the standings after two rounds, three points clear of Garry Pearson. Lepley is tied with Ian Bainbridge, one point behind Pearson, while Tom Llewellin is eight points adrift of the summit.

Black is down in 11th having challenged for Nicky Grist honours but retiring from the Scottish. However, the Ford Fiesta R5 driver is "confident there's more left in the tank, quite a bit more as well" from him and the car and is aiming to showcase that this weekend.

"I've done this rally more than any other rally so I should in theory go pretty well, it should be one of my stronger events," he told MN. "It's a shame that Haye Park's not there because I tend to go quite well on that but I know Radnor fairly well, so I shouldn't really have any excuses, if I don't go well it's just poor driving on my behalf.

"If you have three wins that's going to take it [the title], regardless of who it is from this point on because Elliot's won one, Garry's won one, if I then win one that sets it up for the final three," Black added. "It'd be nice to get a win to be honest."

Lepley's season has been restricted by gear selection problems in Wales and punctures in Scotland but, having scored top BTRDA points on the Woodpecker in 2019, he's vying to turn his season around which he admits hasn't been "perfect by any means" but "not exactly a write-off either".

He told MN: "It's [your] four [best scores] from six rallies [that count], so it starts now! Everyone knows Radnor's fast so hopefully it should suit [our Mitsubishi E10] a bit more and we'll try and close the deficit to the guys in the R5 and R5+s. We've got to try and be a brave and a go a bit faster [than them]."

COMPETITORS LAUD NORTHERN IRELAND COVID PROTOCOLS

Northern Ireland Rally champion Jonathan Greer has expressed support for the series organisers' response to Covid on behalf of all competitors.

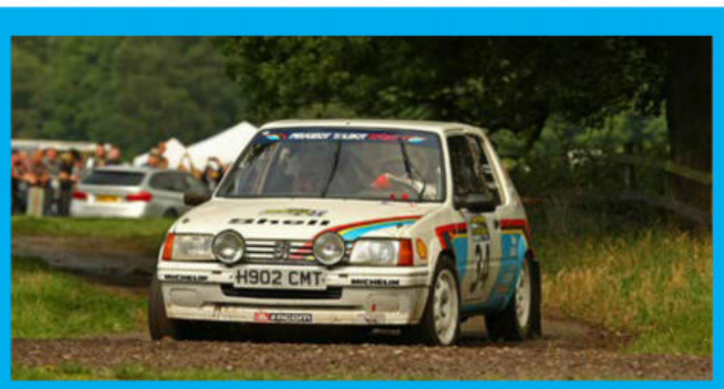
The opening three rounds of the competition have all been played out at single-venue events, with the Carryduff driver winning two of these to head the standings by five points from reigning champion Stephen Wright. The series will now revert to more traditional public roads for the final two events of the year, October's Tour of the Sperrins and the deciding Tyrone Stages Rally in early November.

"The whole thing has worked quite well from a driver's perspective," said Greer, who won the series in 2017. "We are slowly stepping towards full-blown closed-road rallying, which the next two rounds are, so yeah, it [the approach] has been a success this year.

"The Northern Ireland Rally Championship has always been a good championship, it has always had good rallies that have been relatively well supported, and this year there has been an influx of people with it being the first [championship to run in Ireland].

"It's good to see and hopefully they can build on it and put a couple of good years together," he added.

Greer feels that NI organisers have done the right thing



BRITISH WRC CHAMPION AT THE WHEEL

Last weekend's Historic Rally Festival at Weston Park featured an array of classic machinery, the event being organised by Rallying History as the brainchild of Warner Lewis and Mick Covill. The event starred 1990 Women's WRC champion Louise Aitken-Walker, who was back at the wheel of a Group A Peugeot 205 Rallye. Mark Constanduros, who previewed the event in last week's issue, manages the event with Rallying History and acts as spokesperson.

Mellors and Freeman back in the saddle after shunt

MELLORS LOOKING TO REBUILD CONFIDENCE ON THREE SHIRES

Ollie Mellors will start this weekend's Three Shires Stages as "a nice way to gain confidence" after crashing on the Nicky Grist Stages in July.

Mellors overcommitted to a crest on the British Rally Championship event, launching his Proton Iriz R5 into a series of rolls and breaking co-driver Max Freeman's foot.

"I've not been in a car since the Nicky Grist so it'll be interesting," Mellors told MN. "Max seems pretty fired up, he got the all-clear from the doctor [last week], so I think between us we're looking forward to getting back out.

"Obviously we've thought about it and I'm not going to erase it from the memory, it's a lesson learned," Mellors added. "Unfortunately, it was a costly mistake but we're just going to do what we can on The Three Shires. The nice thing about the rally is it's four stages run three times and then another couple of stages so it's a nice way to build back and gain confidence, doing the same stages a couple of times."

The Three Shires is the second round of the Asphalt championship, just one week after the Mewla Rally which was won by Melvyn Evans on Sunday.

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RALLY NEWS

Henry keeps focus

HENRY LIKELY TO SWAP BUSHWHACKER FOR DONEGAL HARVEST

Desi Henry may opt not to defend the Bushwhacker Rally this year, an event he won the last running of in 2019. The gravel rally is a popular event but Henry is preoccupied by his battle with Jonny Greer for this season's Northern Ireland Rally Championship, which is held exclusively on sealed road surfaces.

"We have an entry in for the Bushwhacker Rally in a few weeks' time although we may lean more towards Donegal Harvest Rally as preparation for the Sperrins," he told MN. "There's maybe not much point in doing gravel.

"We would love to go to the Bushwhacker, it's a great rally to win, and I'm not ruling anything out at the minute," he added. "It's always nice to go out and try and retain your title… but the wiser thing to do would probably be to get back on closed roads and get back into writing notes again and all these things, which we haven't done in a year and a half."

TOUR OF EPYNT GETS GREEN LIGHT

Low-key event will satisfy Covid compliance but deliver classic Epynt stage miles

Photos: William Neill, Jakob Ebrey, Port Talbot MC

Port Talbot club worked with authorities to get rallying underway on Epynt ranges

By Nick Garton

Port Talbot Motor Club has confirmed that regulations and entry details for the Tour of Epynt on Sunday October 31 are now on the club's website.

This year's Tour of Epynt has been made possible thanks to the support and agreement of the military base on whose land the event will be run.

As ever in Covid times there are a number of restrictions to which the event must adhere, with to ensure compliance the route unable to use over 2.5 miles of the New Road. Equally certain sections in the centre complex will be out-of-bounds due to military training.

Covid compliance has made a pre-event recce impossible: a digital copy of the route will be supplied to competitors, who will need to be clear of all stages before darkness.

The event will use a central location known as the Quarry as both the service area and the host of the start/finish section.

Military guidelines stipulate that no spectators will be admitted and security will be in place on all approach roads to ensure compliance. The number of team personnel is also restricted, but by working with these restrictions the organisers have a planned route of five stages totalling nearly 60 miles, over the legendary roads of Mynydd Epynt.

The event will be a points-scoring round of the Welsh National Tarmacadam Championship, the King of Epynt Challenge, and the ANWCC Stage Rally Championship.

There will be no formal awards presentation, in order to allow the journey home to start earlier than usual. The event will be using the Sportity app to supply competitors with all necessary event information.

For entry details, visit porttalbotmotorclub.co.uk.

WOMEN TO THE FORE IN MOTORSPORT IRELAND SHAKE-UP

Motorsport Ireland is to establish a Women's Commission to give a women a specific voice across motorsport's various codes.

Tara Duggan – an experienced navigator, and the sister of 2016 Junior British Rally champion Rob – agrees that the move is a welcome development but says it should be regarded as the beginning of a long process.

"While it does appear to be a positive first step towards encouraging women's involvement by the Motorsport Ireland administration, I would like to see more female representation across all of the various commissions and Motorsport Ireland Motor Sport Council," she said.

The Irish governing body also agreed that a new Competitors' Commission will be chaired by Irish Tarmac Champion, Donagh Kelly, alongside a competitors' consultation panel. A revised calendar of stage rallies was also published, kicking off with the Cork '20' Rally on September 19 followed by Donegal Motor Club's Harvest Rally on October 2.

Dates have also been earmarked for the Wexford Stages Rally (October 17), Fastnet Rally (October 24), the Kerry and Mayo Mini Stages Rally on November 7 and 14 respectively, and the Killarney Historic Rally on November 27.

Admin changes in Ireland

Mileage has been hard to come by for Evans before Cork

EVANS KEEN TO SHARPEN UP FOR CORK 20 BID

Irish Tarmac championship regular Meirion Evans took his Volkswagen Polo GTI R5 on the Rallye National du Boulonnais in France late last month and finished third in preparation for the upcoming Cork 20 International Rally on September 19.

With no Irish Tarmac championship to fight for this year or last, Evans' 2021 season began with victory on the Argyll Rally in Scotland and he will also compete on the Three Shires Stages this weekend before Cork 20.

"It's important to get mileage under the belt and then when we need to really push somewhere we want to get a result, when things kick off back home, we're in a place to do that," Evans told MN. "It's just about building back up to where I'm happy with. I wouldn't say I'm 100% there yet, but hopefully on the next one we won't be miles away.

"I want to go to Cork as it's somewhere I've always done decently, I enjoy it down there," he added. "A lot of the Irish boys have been doing BRC and stuff whereas I haven't had the time to do that, so a few of them boys will be sharper so that's why I did this rally [in France]."

KILLARNEY OFFICIALS REINSTATED AFTER INVESTIGATION

Two officials of the Killarney and District Motor Club have had their official licences reinstated by Motorsport Ireland following a hearing into an incident during the Killarney Historic Rally in late 2019.

The result follows an investigation earlier this year into why the emergency services were not deployed to the scene of an accident on the second run over Moll's Gap. The investigation subsequently uncovered other aspects of the event organisation that, allegedly, didn't conform to the regulations and led to a €5000 fine for the club, coupled with a 15-month ban for three officials.

The hearing was delayed because Killarney officials had planned to call several witnesses including two key figures from within Motorsport Ireland. The appeal was subsequently withdrawn by agreement.

Two of the Killarney officials made no concessions for the return of their licences, which now have a 24-month probation clause.

It is understood that neither of the officials were aware of the situation that led to their ban due as both were on another stage of the rally and neither gave the green light for the restart of the rally following the accident. MN understands that the third official chose not to be part of the Zoom hearing.

Officials discussed safety matters from Killarney event

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NITISS AND RAYMOND TO TACKLE RX2e MOTORS IN FRANCE

World Rallycross Championship's heavy hitters to join the new-for-2021 all-electric series at Loheac

By Hal Ridge

World Rallycross Championship event-winner Reinis Nitiss and RX2 support series champion Cyril Raymond will return to a World RX event this weekend racing in the all-electric RX2e series at Loheac in France.

The single-make support category has so-far joined World RX in Spain and Sweden this year, with wins being claimed by Belgian Guillaume de Ridder and Finn Jesse Kallio. The pair will continue their campaigns in France, along with British driver Patrick O'Donovan in the 10-car field, but the stakes will be raised by the addition of Nitiss and Raymond.

"I had a chance to test the new RX2e car at Nysum in Denmark after Round 2 of the RallyX Nordic Championship, and it was a lot of fun," said Nitiss.

"A completely different driving style is required, while the feeling inside the car is a big change from that experienced in an internal combustion engine vehicle. You're sitting in silence waiting for the start, while you only have two pedals and no gear lever but when you race you race, it's fast. All the cars are really equal so it will be good fun to fight against old rivals in a new series."

Raymond has also tested an RX2e machine, and can call on his experience from competing in the now-defunct Projekt E electric support category to World RX last year.

Photos: M&H Photography, rallygallery.com, pro-rally.co.uk

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

Targa contenders playing 'catch the Puma'

John Davies/Nick Bloxham continued their monopoly of overall victories in the BTRDA Targa Championship when they took a start-to-finish win on the Venta Silurum Targa Rally on August 22.

The event was Forresters Car Club's first Targa rally. It consisted of 12 tests, all within the Caerwent Training Area and it gave 40 competitive miles.

Second-placed Dan Morris/Geth Johnson held that position for most of the day and came home to make it a Ford Puma 1-2. Gary White/Bradley White won the Clubman Class, having taken fastest time on four of the last six tests.

The overall award on The Harry & The Ivy Rally on August 21-22 was taken by Tom Grice/Jamie Edwards, who dominated the Novice category in their Ford Fiesta. They dropped just under four minutes over the night but were 17 minutes ahead of their nearest rivals. Expert crews weren't eligible for overall awards, but the class was won by Richard Hunter/Gary Evans, who were the fastest crew over the 100-mile event.

Davies and Bloxham claimed an emphatic win on early August's Hatsford Targa. The event consisted of six tests on stubble fields, providing 30 competitive miles.

Early rain favoured less powerful cars and it was the very standard Toyota Yaris belonging to Will and Lisa Rogers that led initially.

Davies/Bloxham were finally able to get the full power of their Ford Puma down in drying conditions, finishing ahead of Robert Milligan/David Middleditch. Paul Bevan/Ollie Jackson ended in third place, winning the Clubman Rally.

Ian Mills

John Davies is having a splendid summer on Targa

Results

Venta Silurum Targa
Organiser: Forresters Car Club **When:** August 22 **Where:** Caerwent **Championships:** BTRDA & ASWMC **Tests:** 12 **Starters:** 60.
1 John Davies/Nick Bloxham (Ford Puma) 1h25m27s; 2 Dan Morris/Geth Johnson (Puma) +40s; 3 Gary White/Bradley White (BMW 318Ti); 4 Lewis Davies/Craig James (Ford Escort); 5 Steve Retchless/Sasha Heriot (Escort); 6 Jason Stone/Daniel Stone (BMW 318); 7 Robert Davies/Nicola Davies (Escort); 8 Lynn Jones/Rhodri Evans (Escort); 9 Keith Lane/Martin Lane (Ford Ka); 10 Chris Woolley/Jamie Woolley (BMW E30). **Class winners:** Experts: Morris/Johnson; **Semi-Experts:** Davies/James; Novices: Jones/Evans; Clubman: White/White.

The Harry & The Ivy Rally
Organiser: Kirkby Lonsdale Motor Club **When:** August 21-22 **Where:** Cumbria **Championships:** ANWCC & SD34 **Route:** 100 miles **Starters:** 27.
1 Tom Grice/Jamie Edwards (Ford Fiesta) 3m57s; 2 Alan Bennison/Roy Hewitt (Proton Coupe) +17m 42s; 3 Colin Hope/Nick Patrick (Citroen DS3); 4 Jeremy Dale/Katrina Dale (Alfa Romeo 145); 5 Ken Quinn/Arthur Heaton (Toyota Yaris); 6 Pete Jagger/Simon Blackshaw (Peugeot 205); 7 Mark Jones/Corey Powell-Jones (Peugeot 205); 8 Ian Harcourt/Jack Mather (MGF); 9 Connor Stephenson/Adam Taylor (Ford Fiesta ST);10 Richard Hunter/Gary Evans (Ford Escort). **Open class:** Hunter/Evans; 2 Chris Farrell/Andrew Lowe (BMW Compact); 3 John Gornall/Martin Gornall (Peugeot 206 GTi). **Class winners:** Beginners: Stephenson/Taylor.

Hatsford Targa Rally
Organiser: Ross & District Motor Sports Club **When:** August 8 **Where:** Alton, Herefordshire **Championships:** BTRDA, ASWMC, CSMG **Route:** Six tests (31 test miles) **Starters:** 60.
1 John Davies/Nick Bloxham (Ford Puma) 1h21m57s; 2 Robert Milligan/David Middleditch (Austin Mini) +1m 34s; 3 Paul Bevan/Ollie Jackson (Citroen Saxo); 4 Will Rogers/Lisa Rogers (Toyota Yaris); 5 Alan Morgan/Carol Morgan (Suzuki Swift); 6 Huw Morris/Geth Johnson (Ford Focus); 7 Andrew Lees/Grace Lees (Vauxhall Nova); 8 Brian Andrews/James Leighton (Peugeot 106); 9 Ben Griffin/Peter Littlefield (Peugeot 106); 10 Gavin Rogers/Keith Emery (Ford Escort). **Class Winners:** I1: Milligan/Middleditch; I2: Morris/Johnson; CE1: Rogers/Rogers; CE2: Morgan/Morgan; CN1: James Welch/Simon Welch (Yaris); CN2: Mark Greedy/James Greedy (Citroen C2).

PENDRAGON STAGES: BY PHIL JAMES — AUGUST 29

WRIGHT CLAIMS VICTORY ON ACTION-PACKED PENDRAGON

David Wright/Paula Swinscoe took the lead on SS3 and kept their Ford Fiesta R5 ahead over the remaining five stages, although the winners shed their front bumper less than two miles into the opening test.

A fierce battle provided plenty of movement up and down the top of the order. The Ford Fiesta R5 of Gordon Morrison/Derek Keir held second at the finish. The Subaru Impreza WRC of Barry Groundwater/Michael Henry finished third, ahead of Wayne Sisson/Neil Shanks (Mitsubishi Lancer E10).

There was drama aplenty. Craig Bowen's Fiesta S2000T lost second place with a broken propshaft, while Kyle Adam's Escort bounced back onto the road from an off and would finish sixth. Alistair Hutchinson gave daughter Emma a dream debut: their Renault Clio Campus taking the top Class 3 award in 10th.

Wright and Swinscoe showed a clean pair of heels to the Pendragon runners

Results

Pendragon Stages
Organiser: Kirkby Lonsdale Motor Club; Eden Valley Motor Club & Northallerton Automobile Club. **When:** August 29 **Where:** Warcop, Cumbria. **Championships:** NETRC; ANWCC; STRC; NHRCR; BECC; Mini Challenge; KLMC. **Stages:** 8. **Starters:** 87.
1 David Wright/Paula Swinscoe (Ford Fiesta R5) 1hr10m00s; 2 Gordon Morrison/Derek Keir (Fiesta R5); +0m52s; 3 Barry Groundwater/Michael Hendry (Subaru Impreza WRC); 4 Wayne Sisson/Neil Shanks (Mitsubishi Lancer E10); 5 Mark McCulloch/Kirsty Riddick (Ford Escort Mk2); 6 Kyle Adam/Steven Brown (Ford Escort Mk2); 7 Jonathan Mounsey/Richard Wardle (Fiesta R5); 8 Marcus Noble/Jane Edgington (Escort Mk2); 9 Ian Paterson/Alan Paterson (Impreza); 10 Alistair Hutchinson/Emma Hutchinson (Renault Clio). **Classes;** 1:Nicky Cowperthwaite/James Wood (Vauxhall Corsa); 2: Des Campbell/Craig Forsyth (Peugeot 206); 3: Hutchinson/Hutchinson; 4: McCulloch/Riddick; 5: Sisson/Shanks.

MEWLA RALLY: BY SIMON GRONOW — AUGUST 29

EVANS SETS THE PACE TO CLAIM MEWLA GLORY

Melvyn Evans set a blistering pace to repeat his 2003 victory on the Mewla Rally, with Mark Glennerster alongside.

At the finish, the winner said: "I put everything into that: there's not been much left in the R5 car today."

Reigning Motorsport UK Asphalt champions, Jason Pritchard/Phil Clarke picked the wrong tyres for their Ford Focus WRC, with itinerant sheep adding more distraction. They took a hard-won second place.

Damian Cole/Dale Bowen claimed third in their Skoda Fabia R5 ahead of the Subaru Impreza WRC of Bob Fowden/Aled Davies.

The Ford Escort Mk2 of Darren Atkinson/Phil Sandham arrived over a flat crest to find Mark Straker's Darrian T90 stranded in the middle of the road, but nevertheless finished as leading two-wheel-drive runners.

Evans was flying high after giving his all on Mewla

Results

Mewla Rally
Organiser: Epynt Motor Club **When:** August 29 **Where:** Epynt Ranges **Championships:** Motorsport UK Asphalt; BTRDA Mixed Surface; Welsh Tarmacadam; WAMC Historic; ANWCC Stage Rally; WAMC King of Epynt Challenge; BTRDA Fiesta ST Trophy. **Stages:** 9. **Starters:** 115.
1 Melvyn Evans/Mark Glennerster (Skoda Fabia R5) 55m 23s; 2 Jason Pritchard/Phil Clarke (Ford Focus WRC 05) +26s; 3 Damian Cole/Dale Bowen (Skoda Fabia R5); 4 Bob Fowden/Aled Davies (Subaru Impreza S11 WRC05); 5 Mark Kelly/Neil Colman (Ford Fiesta R5); 6 Darren Atkinson/Phil Sandham (Ford Escort Mk2); 7 John Stone/Tom Woodburn (Ford Fiesta RS WRC); 8 Craig Jones/Shaun Layland (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); 9 Dave Willett/John Davies (Ford Escort Mk2); 10 Barry Jones/Ian Davis (Ford Escort Mk 2).

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

The sportscar maestro tackles the readers' questions P20

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Rising British star hails effort of team after another grand prix podium finish

NORRIS: HOMEWORK HAS PAID OFF FOR McLAREN

Norris was right in the mix with Merc in Austria

Briton has high hopes for Silverstone

By Matt James

Lando Norris has credited the work done by his McLaren team as the young Briton stunned with his pace at the Red Bull Ring last weekend with another podium finish.

He started on the front row in Austria and battled on genuine pace with the Mercedes duo of Valtteri Bottas and Lewis Hamilton. He eventually finished third, and that was despite a five-second penalty for early-race contact with Red Bull's Sergio Perez. The race was won by Max Verstappen's Red Bull.

Norris said: "We did make a step forward and I think the car was definitely better and nicer to drive, both in qualifying and the longevity of a race. I think just the conditions also helped and our approach to the strategy was a little bit different this weekend compared to the last one after doing our homework and learning from a few things to try to improve on."

Norris's next race will be in front of a packed house at Silverstone on July 18.

P1report, page four

REPORT

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Fiesta man wraps up Mk Circuit Rally title P28

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HISTORICS

DOWN THE PUB

BOB PEARSON

Historic FF2000 veteran
Age: 74 **Lives:** Didcot

Pearson works on own car

He started on three wheels
"I first started in sidecars in 1970 and I built my own outfit. I did 10 years of that, then I didn't race from 1982 to 1986. I kept nearly going back to the sidecars but then I bought a Formula Ford 2000 Spartan and started doing cars. And I've been in single-seaters ever since. The change came really when my son Ian started in gearbox karting. But we both hated karting and so it couldn't come quick enough for me to get him into cars."

They did Formula Renault together
"He wanted to do BARC Formula Renault and so I said: "that's what we'll do then, we'll buy a couple of them and we'll do it together". Then that series died completely and so it was back to the Formula Ford 2000s. And that's about how it's worked out over the years. Either we both go racing or, if we have a problem, we both go home."

It doesn't get any easier
"I always joke that as long as I'm getting my leg up high enough to get in the car I'll carry on. The hardest bit at 74 is working on the cars, not driving them. The arthritis in your hands makes it hard to do up the nuts and bolts. Ian lives three doors up the road and the cars are all at my place."

They do nearly all the work
"We do it all: the only thing we don't make ourselves is fibreglass bodywork. We build our own engines and gearboxes and we make our own suspension wishbones. We are both engineers so it comes relatively easy, other than the bodywork."

He races for pleasure
"We'll keep going as long as we can. I guess I'm probably slower than I was but you just kind of settle for that. I remember saying to myself, I'm not sure if it was when I first started motorcycle sidecar racing or car racing, that if I don't care where I finish, I could do this forever. It is so much fun. And I've always gone by that principle. Obviously, I do my best but if I'd had a rubbish day and I'm down near the back, who worries? It's the enjoyment that matters for me."

Photos: Russ Otway. Paul Lawrence

Burns' Impreza is one of the stars of the show

RALLY MACHINES MAKE A RETURN TO BLENHEIM PALACE AFTER TWO DECADES

Former RAC Rally stage to showcase iconic mixed surface star cars

By Paul Lawrence

For the first time in more than 20 years, rally cars will be in action in the grounds of Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire during the Salon Prive event on Sunday.

The traditional classic car show and concours event has been extended this year by the addition of rally cars. After a display of cars on Saturday, up to 30 cars from the Ralli22 organisation will do demo runs on Sunday.

The park was a regular special stage on the Lombard RAC Rally in the 1980s and 1990s and the cars will run from the North Gates down to the Great Vanbrugh Bridge.

Headlining will be a display of Richard Burns' cars celebrating the 20th anniversary of his World Rally Championship victory. On show will be the unrestored Subaru Impreza that took Burns to victory on the 2000 Rally of Great Britain, exactly as it crossed the finish line. Salon Privé will also acknowledge Colin McRae, who won the WRC 25 years ago last year.

Sunday will feature an additional display entitled World Rally Champions, featuring 30 rarely seen cars driven in period by rallying greats. The line-up will include Stig Blomqvist's Saab 99 Turbo, Petter Solberg's 2002 Impreza WRC, Juha Kankkunen's 1999 Impreza, an ex-Hannu Mikkola Audi Sport quattro S1 and an ex-Miki Biasion Lancia 037.

Event director David Bagley said: "We're very grateful to Ralli22 for curating such a spectacular group of cars, and to see rally machinery let loose at Blenheim Palace will be unforgettable."

Unfortunately, the £45 admission will likely deter many rally fans.

Three Shires Rally will open British Historic Rally Championship

Historic rally runners finally get green light

After several Covid false starts, the British Historic Rally Championship will finally get under way on Sunday's Malvern-based Three Shires Stages.

The closed-road event will be the first BHRC event to run since the Trackrod Rally at the end of the 2019 season and marks the start of a shortened three-round season. This year's Trackrod (September 24-25) and the Carlisle Stages (October 23) will complete the schedule.

Heading 15 historic entries will be local aces Nick Elliott and Dave Price in their asphalt specification Ford Escort Mk2. Although a pacesetter on gravel, this will be a rare foray onto closed roads for Elliott.

His rivals include similar cars for Alex Allingham, Ben Friend and Baz Stevenson-Wheeler.

Clan Crusader pair return to tackle Isle of Man

Paul Mankin and Peter Scott plan to return a Clan Crusader to rallying on the Isle of Mull 50 years after one of the greatest victories for the low-volume sportscar.

Back in 1972, Alan Conley and Crawford Dunn famously won the Tour of Mull when it was a round of the Motoring News Rally Championship. Now, half a century later, regular historic competitor Mankin has rebuilt a Clan for rallying and, along with hugely experienced co-driver Scott, has secured an entry for the Mull Rally in October.

Mankin's car will run in the same livery as the 1972 winner. Unfortunately, a planned shakedown run on last week's Historic Rally Festival was thwarted by clutch problems.

CROWDS FLOCK TO HISTORIC RALLY FESTIVAL EVENT

After two false starts due to Covid, the inaugural Historic Rally Festival ran successfully at Weston Park recently. A large crowd saw more than 50 cars from across rallying history tackle eight demonstration special stages in the Shropshire parkland venue.

IN BRIEF

Hamilton passes
Adrian Hamilton, son of Le Mans winner Duncan and father of current racer Archie, sadly died last week after suffering a stroke. Through the family business of Duncan Hamilton Ltd, he was central to the classic and race car market for four decades. He rarely competed but was on the grid in a Mercedes for the pilot production saloon car race at Thruxton in the early 1970s.

Tony Bridge
MN was sad to learn of the death of former Clubmans and Special Saloon racer Tony Bridge at the age of 61 after an illness. Bridge, and his brother Nick, were great competitors through the 1970s and 1980s, having started in speed events. Supported by their father Derek, they raced Mallocks and Visions with great success in Clubmans and Tony claimed several national championship titles.

Tony Broster
Tony Broster, who sadly died last week aged 80 after illness, was one of the characters in national racing across several decades. Broster was a racer, engine builder and constructor of the Druid single-seater but was probably best known for his role in the creation and development of the Toyota Formula 3 category which has since evolved into Classic F3. MN sends condolences to his family and many friends in the sport.

Three Castles Trial
The rescheduled Three Castles Trial starts in earnest today (Thursday) with three full days of classic rallying based in Llandudno and covering North Wales. The popular annual event was moved from its regular early-June date due to Covid and more than 80 crews, including many leading contenders in classic rallying, will be tackling special tests and regularity sections before finishing on Llandudno seafront on Saturday afternoon.

Spa on schedule
Motor Racing Legends has added races at the Spa Six-Hour meeting to the schedule for its Historic Touring Car Challenge. The race series for touring cars of the 1970s and 1980s will have two races at the fabulous Belgian track over the weekend of October 1-3. MRL already had races for Pre-War Sports and Woodcote/Moss Trophy 1950s sportscars on the programme.

Jones steps down
Alan Jones will retire from the role of competitions secretary at the Historic Sports Car Club at the end of the season. After 16 years in the role, Jones is retiring and will help hand over the reins to the new post holder.

Busy for Escort pair
Ben Friend and his co-driver Cliffy Simmons will tackle two rallies this weekend in two Ford Escort Mk2s. East Anglian-based Friend will run his forest-spec car on Saturday's Woodpecker Stages and then switch to his asphalt car for Sunday's Three Shire Stages, the opening round of the British Historic Rally Championship.

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

COLUMNIST

MATT JAMES

The MN editor says the challenge – and the peril – of quick corners needs to remain

Photos: Motorsport Images, Mike Hillls Speed Images

W Series fell foul of Eau Rouge

Tyre wall stops the cars quickly

I always enjoy a trip to Thruxton, and so do the majority of the racers. Last weekend's events in Hampshire were a joy and it is great to be at a place where the drivers can stretch their – and their cars' – legs more than usual.

Grand prix drivers and the support categories faced one of their biggest tests of pace of the season at Spa in Belgium last weekend. However there were question marks raised about what is probably the most famous corner in motorsport, Eau Rouge, after a six-car crash in W Series qualifying left two drivers needing hospital treatment.

There is no question about the perils of Eau Rouge, and the death of Formula 2 racer Anthoine Hubert in 2019 brought the dangers of the sweeping turn into sharp focus.

While motorsport should always strive to eliminate crashes of that magnitude, it also needs to retain some of the challenges that drivers – and fans – know are the ultimate thrill.

Young British racer Jack Aitken was caught up in a monster multi-car crash at Eau Rouge in the recent 24-hour race in his Lamborghini and he has some views on the corner.

Aitken said: "The problem is with the kind of crash I had when you hit the barrier on the left, the distance from the middle of Eau Rouge, when you're going up the hill, into that left barrier isn't big enough. You don't have time to slow down.

"It's also for the type of accident I had where you are over-correcting a slide, the car was still relatively straight for me. But I knew there was no way I would avoid the barrier or have time to turn away from it because the run-off is just not deep enough.

"Because of it not being deep enough, when you do collide it absorbs the energy and bounces you back out – it puts you right into the firing line."

Slowing the corner down would be an anathema for drivers but looking at the run-off is something that could – and should – be tackled. British Touring Car Championship racer Dan Lloyd, who is driving for Power Maxed Racing in a Vauxhall Astra, knows the perils of super-quick corners after rolling out of a BTCC round at Church corner at Thruxton when he was in an MG in 2017. Track bosses have since done extensive earthworks on the run-off to level out the extremes of the circuit. Lloyd's views are interesting.

Lloyd says: "I feel a bit hypocritical because I said a few things about Church after my crash, but I would hate to see any corner like that changed. Racing drivers love a challenge and the fast corners are where we are tested the most, but Church is different to Eau Rouge. At Church, when you go off, you go way off. At Eau Rouge, particularly if you go off to the left, you bounce back into the middle of the road.

"What there needs to be, at a corner like Eau Rouge where it is essentially blind and you can't see the accident until you are on it, [is] a warning lighting system or a flag that is more serious than a yellow flag. We all know of drivers who never slow for a yellow, but if you had some kind of crazy flashing light or special flag at one of those turns which warns the racers that there could be a stationary car out of your sight."

Lloyd's BTCC team-mate Jason Plato also has his own views about the uphill sweepers in Belgium. "I agree with Dan about the warning system," he says. "But also, if you look at a crash like Lando Norris had at Eau Rouge in practice, if there was some kind of SAFER barrier there like you have in Indycar Series, then I think there wouldn't have been such an abrupt stop and Lando might have glanced off the barrier. As it is, he hit the tyres and that rips the speed out of the car and sends it spinning. That is where the jeopardy lies in any accident.

"Everyone wants the high-speed tests to prove themselves as drivers, but there are a lot of things that can be done to make them safer."

Amen to that. While the safety of racers is always the paramount concern of any race organiser or circuit boss, the thrill for the fans is seeing a driver put their bravery on the line. That is why we all fell in love with motorsport in the first place and that is why the drivers who can face down fear and display courage will always be heroes to millions.

Earthworks at Church corner at Thruxton have helped make the corner safer for the BTCC drivers

"Motorsport needs to retain some of the challenges which are the ultimate thrill"

FEATURE

Photos: William Neill, Roy Dempster

Desi Henry was thwarted Loughgall Rally event

A second win of the year has put Jonny Greer on top of the table

THE BATTLE BREWING ON THE RALLYING UNDERCARD

Jonny Greer and Desi Henry are locked in a battle for the Northern Ireland Rally Championship title, but things got a touch controversial on the latest round. By Luke Barry

For an instant, we thought just a split second separated the two leading runners on the recent Loughgall Stages Rally before the final stage. But as Jonny Greer's disallowed times were reinstated, his 0.1-second advantage became 9.4s and he was suddenly comfortably clear of title rival Desi Henry. Greer's victory was just the latest twist in a compelling Northern Ireland Rally Championship season so far.

Debuting the Citroen C3 R5 in private hands, Greer drew first blood on the Bishopscourt Stages as Henry punctured and pulled out of the rally having lost bucketloads of time he was never likely to recover. But, in Henry's words, "the Dogleap Rally was the exact reverse" as it was Greer's turn to puncture, falling from first to fourth on the final test having won each of the five previous stages. "We hit something, it nearly knocked our fillings out," Greer remembers.

Heading into the Loughgall event within the country park of the same name, another Greer/Henry battle was anticipated with 2019 champion Stephen Wright's Ford Fiesta R5 also in the mix, keeping the headline acts honest. That battle did prevail, but not in the manner anybody really wanted. The 0.1s advantage that theoretically split Greer and Henry ahead of the final stage was a false dawn which, depending on who you speak to, took rather too long to untangle.

Henry grabbed the lead on SS1 – 2.4s up on Wright and 4.2s clear of Greer – before the see-saw once again tipped, this time away from Henry who ran into fuel pump problems in his Hyundai i20 R5. And so began a series of events that led to the eventual rally winner admitting the result "didn't feel like a win" given the circumstances. It all centred around SS3 that was cancelled due to a spectator injury.

"We got to the end of the stage [SS2] on the emergency fuel pump but we got back into service and we didn't have a [spare] fuel pump," Henry tells MN. "The boys actually fitted a Mk2 Escort fuel pump into the Hyundai. The amount of fittings they had to put on to get it all to tie-in it was really impressive what they had done, I think anybody else would have struggled to do what they did but it was just complete resilience on their part, they were determined.

"So we got out but we never got a run at the stage [SS3], we ended up getting a nominal time 12.6s slower than Jonny. We got the time of the slowest car that had completed the stage [Derek McGarrity]. Originally, they scrapped the whole stage, so we were under the understanding that when we left to go to the last stage of the rally, we were only 0.1s down on Jonny.

"But then on the way out of the control the CLO [competitor liaison officer] had told us that actually no, they weren't allowed according to the regulations, the blue book, to completely scrap the stage. It really didn't work in our favour, that actually put us back into third [but] we came back with second place [and] we were lucky to get it given where we were on stage two, sitting with a broken car. I suppose you could say out of the stages we ran on we were setting quickest times, but we had a problem, so that's just how it goes. That's rallying as we all say."

Greer, naturally, sees things slightly differently: "We were too cautious on the first stage and we dropped a load of time but I knew that I was too cautious, [I] wasn't that worried about it," he tells MN. "[We] went to stage two and took a fair chunk out of time back, we were back in the lead so everything was happy. We'd heard before the start of the stage [SS3] Desi was out with a fuel pump, so that obviously played a wee bit into the thinking on the stage but we had Stephen Wright on our tail so we still had to go for a push to try and open a gap."

CHAMPIONSHIP SCORECARD

NI Rally Championship

DRIVER	RD1	RD2	RD3	TOTAL
Jonny Greer	30	26	30	86
Stephen Wright	27	27	27	81
Desi Henry	1	30	28	59

Greer managed that, pulling another 1.8s clear to lead Wright by 3.9s – everything at this point was "hunky-dory". But the stage cancellation was when Greer's day got complicated. The initial decision from the organisers to annul the stage and delete the times set by the competitors – including Greer – that had completed it wasn't acceptable in Greer's view.

"It put us in a bit of a predicament," he explains, "because Desi was back to within two, three seconds of us but we knew that the [SS3] time had to stand, even though it wasn't showing on the times. We spent the whole rally going 'we don't want to push flat out but we want to stay competitive'. We tried to do that and coming into the final stage the gap was 0.1s and I was thinking to myself, they still haven't fixed this time yet – what do we do here?"

Luckily, the situation was rectified *(see sidebar)* before that final stage and Greer was able to relax but it did give him a stressful experience he feels he shouldn't have had to endure. "It's one of those things that happens but for me it was very poorly handled. It kind of ruined the day for me probably because I think we had the better package to win the day fair and square, even without the penalties or the problems for Desi but the whole way it was handled just kind of took the shine off it. It didn't feel like a win, put it that way."

Loughgall may have been soured then, but the race to the finish of the NI series certainly won't be tempered. With the best four scores from five events to count, Greer is in the box seat but all too aware nothing is secure in rallying as he prepares for the switch from the single-venue rounds to closed-road stages.

"Shackleton [Dogleap Rally] proved all this stuff can go wrong in an instant," says Greer. "With the way the points work it's very hard to open a gap, [and] you just don't know where the next bump in the road's going to come from. Once we go onto the roads it's a different story [and] it will be difficult because obviously we haven't got the closed-road experience in the car yet. We've got a bit of a gap to Stephen [Wright] but we just need to basically make sure we can make the most of it."

Henry has already used up his dropped score with a DNF so is under pressure, but he's talking bullishly: "I think it's all still to play for, but we probably need to win the next two rounds. The next round is our home rally, Tour of the Sperrins, so it'll be all guns blazing to try and recoup a few points so it will! Jonny is going pretty well this year, so it'll be interesting to see where we're at on the proper closed roads. I always say it's the closed roads that tells the men from the boys!"

This battle is one not to peel yourself away from. Let's just hope the twists and turns begin to peter out and we can have a legitimate split-second battle instead. ■

Henry was forced out on Bishopscourt Stages

The campaign began with a win for Greer

Consistency means Wright is with the top two

THE ORGANISERS' VIEW: FOLLOWING THE RULES ACCORDING TO THE MOTORSPORT UK BLUE BOOK

William Fullerton, Loughgall clerk of the course, accepted a call from MN to explain why the stage times were annulled and then reinstated.

"It took a lot longer than anticipated [to sort the SS3 issue] and at that stage I was concerned about the rally and the delay, so my initial reaction was to cancel the stage and carry on otherwise the rally would run on all evening," he said.

"But when I got back and all the fluster was over, I sat down, had a look at the blue book and reinstated those times. The results were only provisional, I could make any decision or change at any time which I then did and reinstated the times for the first four competitors and gave notional times, which was in accordance with the blue book, for the remaining competitors who did not complete the stage. It was as simple as that. It was done fairly and I have no issues with it at all."

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

BTCC REPORT: THRUXTON

IN BRIEF

Jelley's smash
The WSR BMW crew was forced into some early work when Stephen Jelley went off towards the final moments of the opening free practice session on Saturday morning and that prompted a red flag. The session was abandoned as a result with barrier damage at Allard, but the machine was repaired in time for Free Practice 2. The opening session was topped by Josh Cook's BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R, while the second period was topped by Gordon Shedden's Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R

Rowbottom's pole
Team Dynamics Honda Civic driver Dan Rowbottom scored his second pole position in four meetings as he set the benchmark time during the 30-minute session on Saturday afternoon. The 1m15.521s lap he set was 0.086s faster than Jake Hill's MB Motorsport Ford Focus, Championship leader Ash Sutton was seventh in his Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50. Rowbottom's team-mate Gordon Shedden was denied a final shot at pole when his brakes caught fire before his final quick lap.

Neate watching on
Motorbase Performance Ford Focus racer Andy Neate was at Thruxton as he recovers from his recent illness, but his car was once again driven by four-time Renault UK Clio Cup title winner Paul Rivett. Rivett's weekend began with a dramatic spin at Church in the opening race. His best weekend result was 23rd in the second race.

O'Neill's takes the mic
British Touring Car Championship race-winner Paul O'Neill was co-opted into punditry duty for the three races at Thruxton as regular commentator Tim Harvey was attempting to prove that he is still a racing driver by taking part in the Porsche Sprint Challenge Great Britain races in Hampshire.

Anniversary Chilton
Tom Chilton celebrated his 400th British Touring Car Championship race at Thruxton in the opening event of the weekend. The Ciceley Motosport BMW 330i M Sport driver, who first raced in the BTCC in 2002, finished in 14th position. In the final race, Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 driver Chris Smiley notched his 150th BTCC start and marked it with a ninth-placed finish.

Jack Sears Trophy
Daniel Rowbottom again lifted the silverware in the Jack Sears Trophy on two occasions at Thruxton in his Team Dynamics Honda, while a single victory went the way of Jack Butel in his Excelr8 Trade Price Cars Racing Hyundai. Rowbottom still tops the points .

Rowbottom: JST leader

Josh Cook was the pace man

Reigning champ Sutton took race two win

COOK SHINES AS SUTTON TURNS THE SCREW

Two wins for the Honda man, but the champ is happiest of all. By Matt James

While Josh Cook was the big points winner at Thruxton in his BTC Racing Honda Civic, with a victory and a second place on his way to a whopping 50-mark haul from the weekend, table-topper Ash Sutton was the man with the biggest smile.

The Laser Tools Infiniti driver won the second race and it helped him to outscore both his title rivals – Tom Ingram (Excelr8 Trade Price Cars Racing Hyundai i30 N) and Colin Turkington (WSR BMW 330i M Sport) – at the close of play.

The meeting was signed off with a flourish and a superb second win of the campaign from Adam Morgan (Ciceley Motorsport BMW 330i M Sport) who has moved up to sixth in the table as a result, but he is an awful long way from the superb Sutton.

Race one

Before last weekend's meeting, the Honda Civic FK8 had won seven of the last 15 BTCC races at Thruxton. So when Dan Rowbottom pulled a pole-winning lap out during qualifying in his Team Dynamics, it looked like the pattern was set to continue – particularly as the Kidderminster driver only had 27kg of success ballast aboard.

What he had factored without, though, was the third-placed-starting Cook in his BTC Racing-run version of the Japanese hatchback. Cook won twice in Hampshire at the start of the season and took a huge step to his hat-trick when he out-started front-row man Jake Hill (MB Motorsport Ford Focus) on the run into Allard.

Cook's ambition didn't stop there, and he ran around the outside of Rowbottom into Campbell when the Dynamics man locked his front tyres briefly, had the inside for Cobb and was into first place.

Such was the delay to Rowbottom that he lost ground to the opportunistic Tom Oliphant (WSR BMW 330i M Sport) and Hill too.

Hill didn't hang around in third spot, though, and pulled what would be the move of the race to reclaim second place going into the Club chicane at the end of the opening tour. "The car has always been pretty stable and I was happy with that," said the Kent racer. The deposed Oliphant had a more expansive viewpoint: "The laws of physics dictate that [a rear-wheel-drive car] couldn't brake that late on lap one [due to cold front tyres] so I couldn't hold him off. I thought I had braked as late as I could, but fair play to Jake – that was an excellent pass."

Hill set off after Cook, but there was nothing he could do about the flying Honda ahead. "I made a mistake at Church but then on the next lap so did he. I had to keep the pressure on because he might have made another one," said Hill.

The eventual winner didn't err again and went on to his sixth career victory at Thruxton and his fifth in the Civic.

"The guys were reading out the gap to me on the radio, and I was just trying to control things," said the Bath man. "This car really looks after its tyres too, so I was just trying to manage things.

"In reality, the race was won at the start and I knew I had to go for the lead then. I managed to weave ahead of Rowbottom and I wasn't going to take my foot off the gas."

Behind Oliphant in third, Rory Butcher put in one of the drives of the race to hang on to fourth position.

The Speedworks Motorsport Toyota man had reworked the set-up on the Corolla after qualifying fourth and jumped Rowbottom on lap nine. His robust move into the Complex also allowed the fully ballast-laden Sutton to follow him through and Butcher was then given a thorough workover by the Infiniti.

"I knew where Ash was quicker and I was looking in my mirrors for a bit," said Butcher. "But then I relaxed and got my rhythm back. I was really pleased with the car and am really looking forward to the next race."

Rowbottom followed in sixth and was scratching his head with a lack of front-end grip. Morgan brought his BMW home ahead of Senna Proctor's BTC Racing Honda.

Behind them, Jason Plato worked manfully to wrest ninth spot from Ingram, once the penalised Dan Lloyd (Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra) had been dropped from eighth to 11th after a five-second penalty for an out-of-position start.

Ingram's Hyundai, with 66kg of ballast, was finally jumped with a round-the-outside move at the chicane on lap 15 by Plato's Power Maxed Racing Astra, and it was a move that oh-so-nearly allowed Turkington to capitalise too. As it was, Turkington was placed 12th, behind Lloyd, at the flag.

Race two

The ominous signs in race one had been there. Sutton's charge behind Butcher in race one had been conducted with 75kg aboard. For race two, he would be starting two places further up the grid in fifth and would carry 36kg less ballast into the 16-lapper. The major question mark hanging over the race was just how long it would take for the reigning champion to hit the front.

The answer was 10 laps (plus a few hundred yards). Cook was 2.2s up the road by the time Sutton had cleared second-placed Oliphant at Allard at the start of lap four by using superior traction out of the Club chicane, and the leader was on borrowed time – particularly as it was now his Honda was now saddled with 75kg of ballast.

Again, it was a strong exit from the chicane that helped Sutton park his Infiniti on the inside of Cook as they reached Allard and the Infiniti man was free. Cook tried his best to keep up, but had no answer for his great friend.

Sutton put his race-winning run down to a strong opening lap where he had dealt with Butcher and Hill ahead. Butcher had initially taken third but a small wobble at Goodwood on lap one delayed him slightly and caused Hill to check up just briefly. On the dash down to Church, Sutton swept ahead of the Focus too and stuck his flag in third spot.

"That was the break I needed to get out of the riff-raff," joked the eventual winner. "I went through the eye of a needle there and it worked. After that, it was a great battle with Josh and he is a great racer. He didn't make it easy for me."

For his part, Cook didn't put up too much of a fight. He was happy to have claimed a first and a second in the opening two races. "Ash had more traction than me coming out of the slow stuff, so once he was down the inside going into Allard, that was it. There was no point defending that one," he said.

Behind them, Oliphant collected his second podium of the weekend and he was another who admitted that Sutton's pace was simply irresistible. Once the Infiniti had gone by, the BMW had a plan. "I just wanted to follow him," he explained. "This track doesn't suit our car as much as it does others. I was hanging on."

Behind a lonely Hill in fourth place, the big drama centred over the fight for fifth. From as early as lap five, Butcher was forced to look to his mirrors to fend off Ingram, who was trying everything he knew to unseat his former mount, the Corolla.

After some very high-speed and physical exchanges, Ingram made it stick at the Complex on lap 15 and soon scampered clear as Butcher was in damage limitation mode and had a rear-view mirror full of Turkington, Proctor, Morgan and Plato.

Sixth would still have been a handy reward for the Scot, who was lugging around 48kg of ballast, However, Ingram's hard work to wrest fifth was for naught as his front-left Goodyear exploded at Church on the final tour and dropped him to 12th spot.

Perhaps the happiest man about that was Morgan, who thus inherited eighth and with it, the prime spot for the reversed-grid race to round out the day. He would share the front row with Proctor with Turkington lurking in third spot. That would, at least, give a glimmer of hope to Turkington after he had shipped so many points to Sutton.

There was no glimmer of hope for Team Dynamics, which suffered a double disaster with two mechanical problems. Firstly, Shedden's clutch stopped working and he was forced to park up and, on the same lap, Rowbottom was thwarted by a turbo valve issue.

Race three

The weekend's finale only featured 12 racing laps from the scheduled 19, but they included plenty of drama.

Through it all came Morgan, who kept his cool – but only just. He powered away from the line to head Turkington and Proctor into the Complex on the opening tour with Hill and Butcher following but the jostling pack was calmed by the time they had reached Church.

At the opening corner, Shedden had tagged the BTC Racing Honda Civic of Jade Edwards and both smote the wall, Edwards with a mighty force. She was unharmed, but the clear-up took four laps.

At the restart, Morgan held the queue in check until the exit of the Club chicane before going for the loud pedal, which was enough to thwart any attempt from Turkington to grab top slot.

Morgan explained it was a rehearsed

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Mike Hills Speed Images, Steve Hindle

Morgan (r) nearly threw away victory in race three

There was late heartbreak for Tom Ingram's Hyundai in race two

Jake Hill was the weekend's second-highest points scorer

tactic. "In the week leading up to the race I had been on the simulator working through all these scenarios, and I had watched previous footage," he said. "I knew Colin would be strong into the Complex after a restart, so I had to come up with a plan to counter that."

Turkington was only tenths behind the fellow BMW 330i M Sport when the green flags flew and was half a second back when the safety car was called again. A midfield skirmish involving Sam Smelt's Speedworks Toyota and Carl Boardley's Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50 parked the Corolla in the bank and it required removal.

At the second time of asking, Morgan chose to light up his Ciceley car way before the Club chicane at the restart and again outfoxed Turkington. This time the green flags flew for only one lap after Ollie Jackson's MB Motorsport Focus broke an upright after contact and required a tow from the circuit.

This is where the race sparked into life, as on lap 16, after a third successful getaway in the lead, Morgan locked up going into the Club chicane and was forced to cut straight through the switchback. His 0.7s advantage suddenly became 2.4s. WSR was already preparing an inquest on Turkington's behalf before the chequered flag had flown.

Morgan, for his part, felt the incident had done him more harm than good: "I had been looking in my mirror and lost concentration for a moment. I was out of control and there is no way I could have made the chicane.

"The tyre was on its last legs after that and Turkington sliced the new-found gap to the leader down to just 0.3s when the 19 laps finally finished. There were the predictable rumblings in the clerk of the course's office afterwards but Morgan kept the win.

Apart from that, the race was subdued. Proctor duly picked up his fourth podium of the campaign ahead of Hill. Ingram eventually worked his way through the order and ahead of a stubborn Cook and Butcher (with a ballsy move at Noble) to land fifth, and the fastest lap to boot.

Plato and Chris Smiley (Excelr8 Trade Price Cars Racing Hyundai) were eighth and ninth respectively while race-two winner Sutton, who had been wrong-footed as Ingram came charging through on lap seven, was 10th.

SUPPORT RACES

Oliver Gray (Fortec Motorsport) took a brace of British F4 wins, his first on Saturday coming from pole as he fended off Matias Zagazeta (Argenti Motorsport), while he also scooped the final race after a fierce fight with team-mate Joel Granfors that came to the last corner. Granfors launched himself over the kerbs and dropped to third behind an opportunistic Zagazeta, while Granfors won the middle race to snatch his first win of the season.

Theo Edgerton (TCR) wrapped up the Porsche Sprint Challenge title with a brace of wins, his first coming after a demon start catapulted him ahead of polesitter Jack Bartholomew who chased hard but spun into the pitwall on the penultimate lap. Bartholomew missed race two which allowed Edgerton to clear off for an eighth win of the season from Matt Armstrong (Team Parker Racing) and guest driver Tim Harvey (TPR). Ian Humphris (Valluga) bagged two more wins en route to the Am title.

The usual frantic Ginetta Junior races fell to Callum Voisin and Robert de Haan. Tall Dutch teenager De Haan (Richardson Racing) took his breakthrough win on Saturday from Will Jenkins (Elite Motorsport), while he took the third race after a race-long tussle with race two winner Callum Voisin (R Racing) and a grass-cutting Seb Hopkins (Elite Motorsport) who ended up on the green stuff in avoidance of contact. Voisin's middle-race win came from Hopkins while Aston Millar (R Racing) bagged third.

Adam Smalley (Elite) took a brace of Ginetta GT4 Supercup wins with team-mate Josh Rattican shadowing him home in both races. Sunday's reversed-grid race fell to James Blake-Baldwin (AK Motorsport) who stormed clear as Smalley had to defend second from Elite team-mate Tom Emson.

Louie Capozzoli (LDR Performance Tuning) took two Mini Challenge wins, his first coming after a race-long duel went to the wire and a last-lap chicane smash, while he fought back into the lead of race two just before the safety car brought overtaking opportunities to a close. Lee Pearce (Graves Motorsport) won a truncated race three after Clark Wells (Lee Pearce Racing) crashed at Church.

David Addison

RACE WINNERS

■ **British F4 Championship**
Races 1 & 3: Oliver Gray (Fortec Motorsport); **Race 2:** Joel Granfors (Fortec Motorsport)

■ **Ginetta Junior Championship**
Races 1 & 3: Robert de Haan (Richardson Racing); **Race 2:** Callum Voisin (R Racing)

■ **Ginetta GT4 Supercup**
Races 1 & 2: Adam Smalley (Elite Motorsport); **Race 3:** James Blake-Baldwin (AK Motorsport)

■ **Mini Challenge**
Races 1 & 2: Louie Capozzoli (LDR Performance Tuning); **Race 3:** Lee Pearce (Graves Motorsport)

■ **Porsche Sprint Challenge**
Races 1 & 2: Theo Edgerton (TCR)

Gray won as Granfors went flying in the final Formula 4 clash

RESULTS

BTCC
Round 16
Laps: 16 Track: overcast but dry

	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Josh Cook (33)	BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R	20m37.012s
2	Jake Hill (39)	MB Motorsport Ford Focus	+1.360s
3	Tom Oliphant	WSR BMW 330i M Sport	+3.740s
4	Rory Butcher	Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla	+5.847s
5	Ash Sutton (75)	Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50	+6.506s
6	Dan Rowbottom (27)	Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R	+9.260s
7	Adam Morgan (9)	Ciceley Motorsport BMW 330i M Sport	+10.617s
8	Senna Proctor	BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R	+12.144
9	Jason Plato	Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra	+14.511s
10	Tom Ingram (66)	Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N	+15.970s

11 Dan Lloyd (Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra) +16.635s*; 12 Colin Turkington (57) (WSR BMW 330i M Sport) +16.667s; 13 Gordon Shedden (48) (Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R) +17.480s; 14 Tom Chilton (Ciceley Motorsport BMW 330i M Sport) +17.865s; 15 Stephen Jelley (21) (WSR BMW 330i M Sport) +18.535s; 16 Chris Smiley (Excelr8 Motorsport Hyundai i30 N) +21.659s; 17 Ollie Jackson (MB Motorsport Ford Focus) +22.165s; 18 Aiden Moffat (15) (Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50) +22.375s**; 19 Jack Butel (Excelr8 Trade Price Cars Hyundai i30 N) +23.507s; 20 Jack Goff (Team Hard Cupra R) +23.983s; 21 Jade Edwards (BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R) +24.259s; 22 Sam Osborne (Motorbase Performance Ford Focus) +31.104s; 23 Jack Mitchell (Team Hard Cupra R) +33.060s; 24 Carl Boardley (Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50) +35.373s; 25 Rick Parfitt (Excelr8 Trade Price Cars Racing Hyundai i30 N) +35.696s; 26 Sam Smelt (Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla) -1 lap; 27 Aron Taylor-Smith (Team Hard Cupra R) -1 lap; 28 Nic Hamilton (Team Hard Cupra R) -1 lap; 29 Paul Rivett (Motorbase Performance Ford Focus) -1 lap. **Pole position:** Rowbottom 1m15.521s (112.30mph). Winner's average speed: 109.70mph. **Fastest lap:** Cook 1m16.260s (111.21mph). **Lap leaders:** Cook 1-16. * = 5s penalty for out-of-position start. ** = 1s penalty for contact. **Brackets** = success ballast.

Round 17: 16 laps Track: dry

	DRIVER	TIME
1	Sutton (39)	20m42.975s
2	Cook (75)	+0.878s
3	Oliphant (57)	+4.504s
4	Hill (66)	+5.036s
5	Butcher (48)	+8.059s
6	Turkington	+8.452s
7	Proctor (21)	+8.973s
8	Morgan (27)	+10.140s
9	Plato (15)	+10.995s
10	Lloyd	+11.297s

11 Smiley +11.596s; 12 Ingram (9) +13.721s; 13 Moffat +16.450s; 14 Jelley +16.844s; 15 Butel +17.363s; 16 Goff +18.875s; 17 Chilton +20.066s; 18 Jackson +22.286s; 19 Osborne +24.582s; 20 Parfitt +25.105s; 21 Boardley +27.640s; 22 Smelt +28.163s; 23 Rivett +28.679s; 24 Edwards +29.365s; 25 Hamilton +46.624s; NC Rowbottom (33) 10 laps/turbo boost issue; R Mitchell 4 laps/steering damage; R Shedden 2 laps/clutch; R Taylor-Smith 0 laps/driveshaft. **Winner's average speed:** 109.17mph. **Fastest lap:** Cook 1m16.392s (111.02mph). **Lap leaders:** Cook 1-10; Sutton 11-16. **Brackets** = success ballast

Round 18: 19 laps Track: dry

	DRIVER	TIME
1	Morgan (21)	32m38.972s
2	Turkington (33)	+0.313s
3	Proctor (27)	+0.767s
4	Hill (48)	+1.344
5	Ingram	+2.728s
6	Butcher (39)	+3.022s
7	Cook (66)	+3.412s
8	Plato (15)	+3.653s
9	Smiley	+3.954s
10	Sutton (75)	+4.440s

11 Lloyd (9) +4.750s; 12 Oliphant (57) +5.660s; 13 Moffat +5.925s; 14 Rowbottom 6.618s; 15 Jelley +6.969s; 16 Butel +7.570s; 17 Chilton +8.209s; 18 Goff +8.486s; 19 Osborne +8.838s; 20 Parfitt +9.410s; 21 Mitchell +14.049s; 22 Hamilton +21.820s; 23 Taylor-Smith -1 lap; R Rivett 16 laps/overheating-damage; R Jackson 13 laps/damage; R Boardley 9 laps/damage; R Smelt 8 laps/accident; R Shedden 1 lap/damage; R Edwards 0 laps/crash. **Winner's average speed:** 82.26mph. **Fastest lap:** Ingram 1m16.630s (110.68mph). **Lap leaders:** Morgan 1-19. **Brackets** = success ballast.

Drivers standings

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Ash Sutton	210
2	Tom Ingram	180
3	Josh Cook	173
4	Jake Hill	171
5	Colin Turkington	169
6	Adam Morgan	144
7	Rory Butcher	136
8	Dan Rowbottom	134
9	Gordon Shedden	132
10	Senna Proctor	131

11 Stephen Jelley 117; 12 Aiden Moffat 114; 13 Jason Plato 113; 14 Tom Oliphant 110; 15 Chris Smiley 83; 16 Dan Lloyd 75; 17 Jack Goff 71; 18 Ollie Jackson 41; 19 Dan Cammish 30; 20 Carl Boardley 25; 21 Tom Chilton 24; 22 Aron Taylor-Smith 15; 23 Sam Osborne 5; 24 Jack Butel 3; 25 Sam Smelt 2; 26 Jade Edwards 1.

Independents Trophy

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Sutton	238
2	Ingram	210
3	Cook	198
4	Morgan	194
5	Rowbottom	177
6	Shedden	170
7	Moffat	164
8	Proctor	163
9	Plato	157
10	Smiley	13

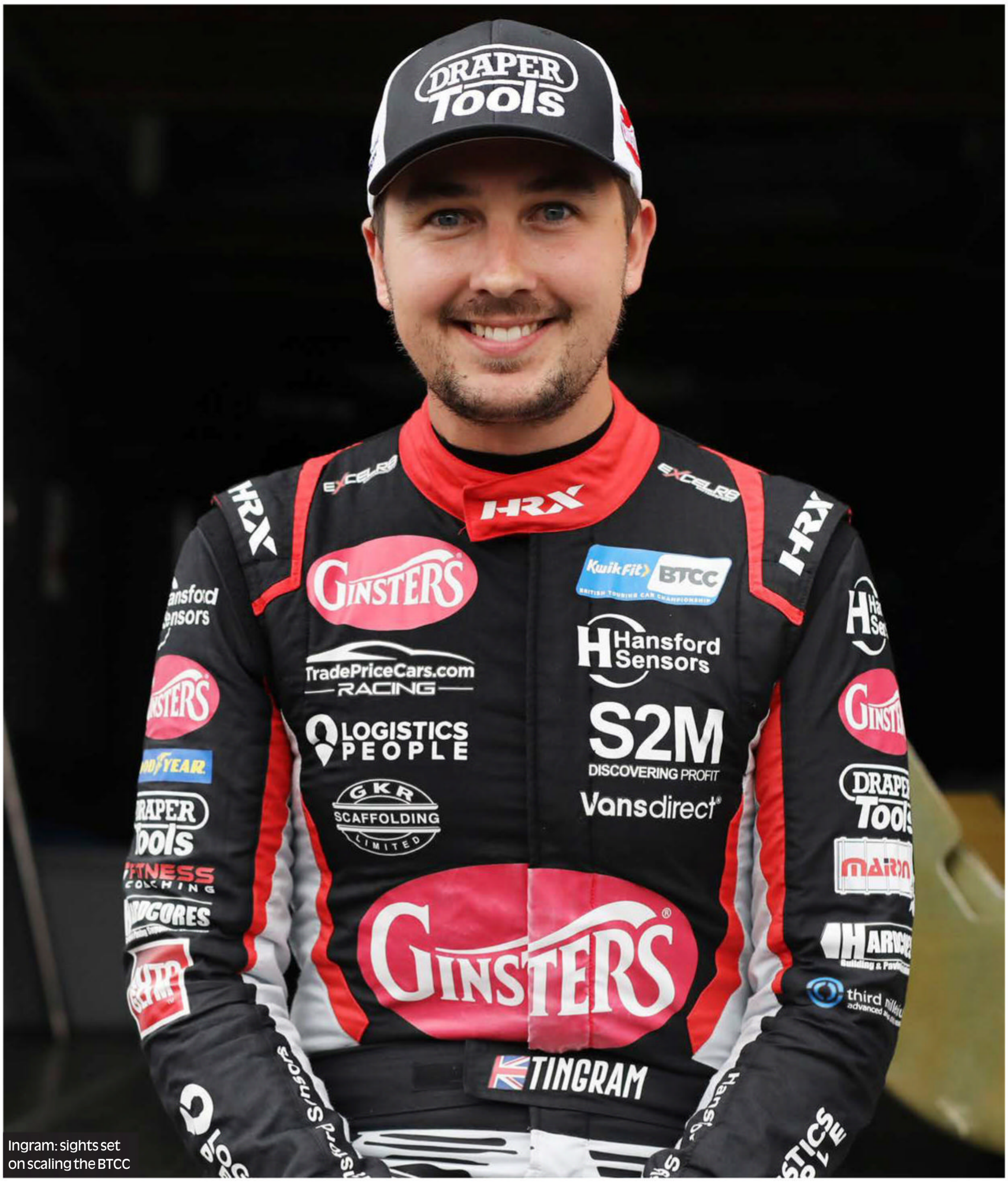
11 Lloyd 126; 12 Goff 123; 13 Chilton 67; 14 Boardley 63; 15 Taylor-Smith 61; 16 Butel 40; 17 Cammish 32; 18 Rick Parfitt 16; 19 Edwards 15; 20 Nic Hamilton 7; 21 Jack Mitchell 3.

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

FEATURE

TOM INGRAM: I AM LIVING MY BOYHOOD DREAM

Matt James sat down with the British tin-top star to pose your questions



Ingram: sights set on scaling the BTCC

There was some highly charged onboard footage from Tom Ingram's Speedworks Toyota Avensis in the final throes of the 2018 British Touring Car Championship title battle.

Ingram had given it his best shot but come up just short in the penultimate race of the season at Brands Hatch. Despite going off, Colin Turkington had done enough to seal the silverware when Ingram could only finish fourth on the road.

"Is that it? Is it really over?" he asked on the pits-to-car radio. The confirmation came back with the news he didn't want to hear.

He replied, obviously in tears. "I'm sorry guys, I gave it everything I could," he croaked

That is typical of the driver. His first thoughts were for the effort and hard graft that everyone had put in up to that point to get him to the cusp of the crown.

Most of Ingram's background in motorsport had been about struggles, mostly for cash. But his determination and character – and his hard-work ethic – has made it happen for him. He is now part of the championship that he dreamt of being involved with when he was a young child.

This year, he is leading the line for the Excelr8 Trade Price Cars Racing team and is in the heart of the title battle in his Hyundai i30 Fastback N Performance. It is a new programme for him and one that he and his engineer Spencer Aldridge turned into a winner from the second meeting of the campaign. It is all up for grabs, and he does not want the Brands Hatch heartbreak again.

In the build-up to last weekend's action at Thruxton, he kindly sat down and tackled the Motorsport News readers' questions.

Question: Where did the interest in motorsport come from? Was it in your family?
John Charles
Via email
Tom Ingram: "It came from my dad, Bruce, as I think is the case with most racing drivers.

"My dad used to race quad bikes, motocross – basically anything that was muddy, dangerous and involved getting hurt. He managed to break his pelvis in a quad bike crash. He had the accident, kicked the machine back onto its wheels, finished the race, drove back and then realised when he got on the driveway at home that he was in pain.

"The doctor told him to go and do something less dangerous, so he started racing karts when I was about four years old. I used to go to all of the races and I would sit in the kart when he wasn't on track and be making all the engine noises, like you do when you are a kid.

"When I was five, Santa Claus was very kind and he got me a kart. The driveway at mum and dad's house isn't long – about 20ft, if that – but it is on a bit of a slope. On Christmas morning, in my pyjamas and

Photos:Jakob Ebrey

Racer is putting together a title bid in his Hyundai

my trainers, I was sat in the kart. I was at the top of the slope and dad put a line of duct tape on the floor just in front of the steel roller doors on the garage. Without the engine running, dad pushed me down the hill and said that if I could stop by the time my front wheels were on the duct tape and not hit the garage door, he would take me out to a track on the day after Boxing Day. I bounced off this huge steel door about four or five times until I eventually got it right. Dad was true to his word and I was out two days later at a track called Reading Trail Park. That is where it all started for me."

MN: But you couldn't race at five years old back then, could you?

TI: "No, you had to wait until eight years old. Bambino karts didn't exist then. You had to find places that would let you go out, and so I spent the next couple of years just getting track time where I could.

"I did my Association of Racing Kart Schools [ARKS] test on the day of my eighth birthday at Sandown Park, and then I had my first race a few days later and I finished second in my first event in a grid of about 28 others. I missed out on the win by about 0.02s. That was at Bayford Meadows, and I raced there and at Buckmore and Lydd, places like that."

Question: Was it really all about becoming a British Touring Car Championship when you were a kid? Not Formula 1?
Jason Inglis
Via email

TI: "Formula 1 – and this is true to an extent even today – it doesn't really interest me that much. I admire the engineering and I admire the ability to race at that speed, but it has never appealed to me in the way that I wanted to be there. I much prefer hard racing and I like scrapping. I am a battler.

"I loved motorcycle racing and Carl Fogarty was my hero when I was growing up. He had a red bike and I really liked that – that has always been my colour and still is now. And when I started watching he was number one and I loved that – and I loved his attitude to racing.

"The reason I got switched on to touring cars was that I went to the Autosport Show in 1999 on the Friday with my dad when I was five. I met Matt Neal, and my parents still have a photo of a tiny me looking up at the giant that is Mr Neal.

"At the end of the 1999 season, dad bought me the British Touring Car Championship season review video. I used to watch that video every day before I went to school and even now I could probably recite the entire commentary word for word. It was so cool with the night races and things. I would watch it before school and afterwards, and I just had this fascination with it. That is where the passion for tin-tops really started. I knew then that it was what I wanted to do and I have followed it religiously ever since that point."

MN: So you were karting: what age were you when you took part in your first circuit race?

TI: "I got into Ginetta Juniors at the end of 2008 when I got the car and my first season was 2009 when I was 15 turning into 16."

continued on page 23

"I looked up at the giant Matt Neal"

Tom Ingram

Ingram: first season was truncated by a lack of budget for the year

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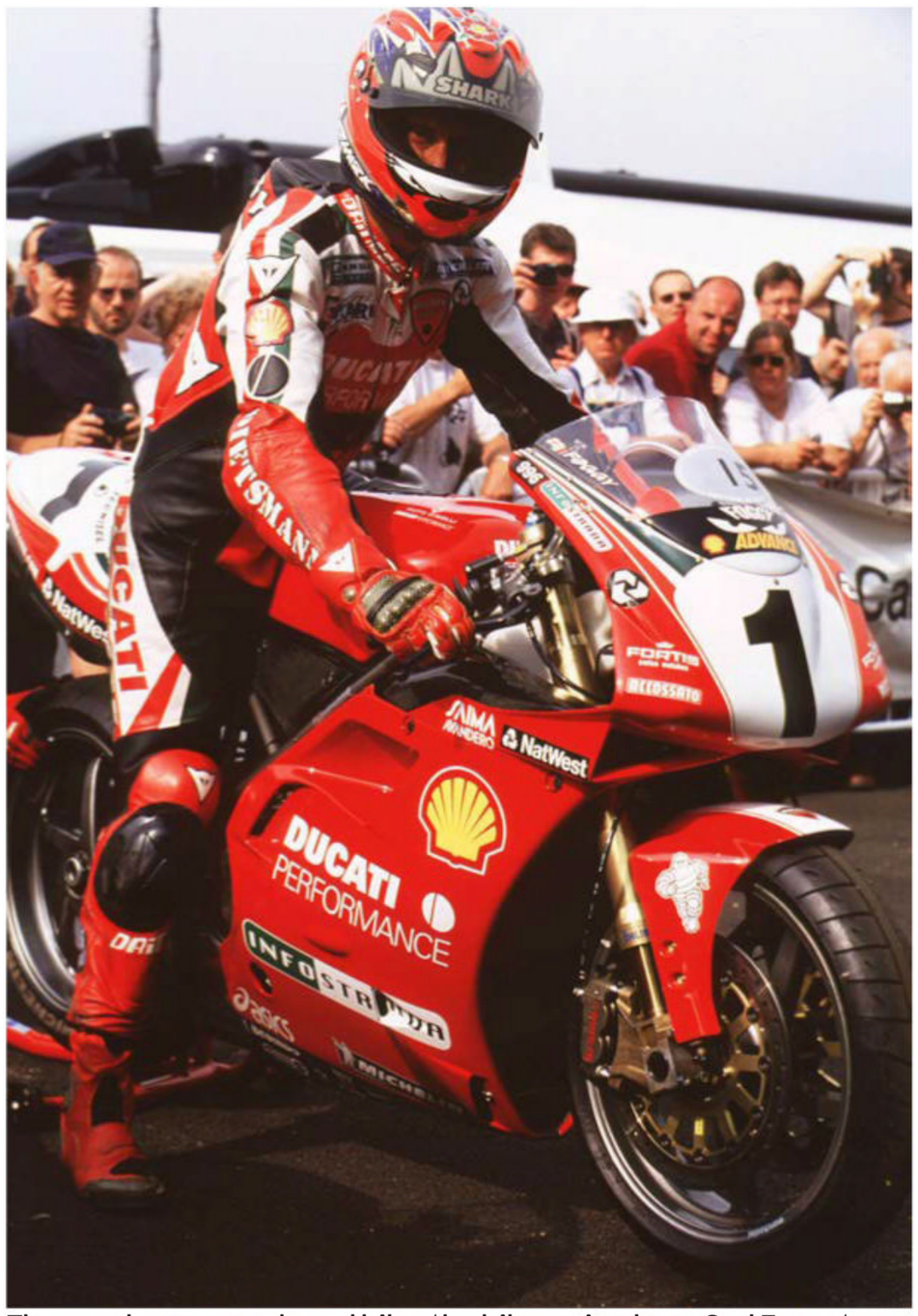

The number one and a red bike: the bike racing hero Carl Fogarty

Sharing the GInetta Junior podium with Sarah Moore and Alex Austin at Thruxton in 2009

Ingram started in the G50 with Plans Motorsport in '11

Ingram's maiden car racing title came in 2010 in Ginetta Juniors

Question: How close were you to having to give up your dream? Is it true your parents re-mortgaged their house?
Barry May
Via email
TI: "In 2009, I missed five rounds due to the fact we simply didn't have the money. We were running with the Tockwith team, but all we did was hire some awning space from them because we couldn't afford our own. It was dad and I running the car.

"Our first race was at Brands Hatch. I turned up there and all had done up to that point was some laps around Llandow in south Wales. That track's basically four corners! I had never had any instruction or coaching; there was no-one telling me what to do.

"The second meeting was at Thruxton, and I got a podium. Then I missed half the season but came back in 2010. That was down to the generosity of [Ginetta boss] Lawrence Tomlinson: without him, I wouldn't have been racing at all. Richard Ollerenshaw at Hillspeed was also a massive help. They let me go racing and I won the first-ever race for the Ginetta G40 model at Thruxton and then I went on to win the championship – it was Jake Hill and I battling for the title all season long."

MN sets the scene: In 2012, Jason Plato selected a number of up-and-coming young drivers to support through his links with Tesco's energy drinks brand KX, which was sponsoring his MG in the BTCC. Ingram was one of the first drivers selected to be part of the KX Akademy, which also offered a mentoring scheme.
Question: Was there any bit of advice Jason Plato gave you in the KX Akademy which you ignored?
Damien Doherty
Via email
TI: "There probably was, but because I ignored it, I can't remember what it was! Being selected as a member of the KX Akademy was a massive turning point for me. It genuinely was, because that was the first time I could look at motorsport from a different perspective. I could look at it in the way of turning it into a career, which I hadn't been able to do up to that point because it had been so hand to mouth.

"Rewinding a little, if I hadn't won Ginetta Juniors in 2010, I wouldn't have been able to race in 2011. If I hadn't won the Ginetta GT Supercup in 2011, I wouldn't have been able to race in 2012. And if I hadn't have been racing in that season, I would never have come to the attention of the KX Akademy.

"I picked up a deal with an electronic cigarette company that year too, which was the first deal I had really been able to land. That saw me through, but probably would only have got me three-quarters of the way through the season. The KX Akademy was only ever meant to be a budget top-up, and it came at the perfect time for me to enable me to finish the season.

"One of the best bits of advice that Jason gave me, actually, was get yourself a brand and stick to it. That is where the Tingram thing started, and that is how I am known to most BTCC fans now."

Question: What has been your favourite race you've ever taken part in where you didn't win?
Katie Abbott
Via Facebook
TI: "My favourite would be my first BTCC podium at Rockingham in 2015. I was battling with Jason for the entire race."
MN: But you must have been gutted: you were really close to winning that race…your maiden win…
TI: "It wasn't gutting. I think it was better to finish second than it was to win. I learned more from not winning it than I would have done had I finished in first place. If I had have cleared off into the distance, what would I have learned? Not half as much as I did – all the cutesy tactics, and things like that. It was an education, and it was the best second place I could ever have."

Question: If you could pick different team-mates than you have now, who would you pick?
Katie Abbott
Via Facebook
MN: What is it like actually working with a team-mate after so long being in a one-car squad?
TI: "I really enjoy working with a team-mate. I am finding it really good. We are all open with our data and things. Everyone can see what everyone else is doing, and we do things like track walks together. We are all trying to make sure that we are in the best place possible.

"Chris [Smiley, Ingram's team-mate in the Excelr8 side of the four-car operation] is a great team-mate to have because he is fast. He also likes the car set up the same way I do, which is a real help."
MN: What style of set-up do you prefer?
TI: "I like a car that is very reactive at the front. So long as I can turn the car in and get the nose to do what I want, I am not really bothered about the rear of the car. I can handle a bit of oversteer.

"Who would I like to have if I could have anyone? I would like to have someone who is a bit older, perhaps.

continued on page 24

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FEATURE

Ingram claimed the Ginetta GT Supercup in 2013

Somebody who is wise and has been around a bit. Maybe they will have a different approach. Someone like Matt Neal.

"What I have learned more and more as the seasons have gone through is the value of experience. Speed is obviously valuable, but the benefit of experience is also very strong. It is key in any championship in general, but you can see some guys who are really quick over one lap but they don't have the race pace or the confidence in their own judgement to be able to back it up.

"So I would love to be in a team with someone like Plato or Neal, or maybe even Gordon Shedden to a degree. They are people who have been there, seen it and done it. Yes I have been in the BTCC for seven years now, but I am still a spring chicken: I am a new kid compared to some of the others."

MN: Do you still consider yourself as an up-and-coming driver, or are you established now – in your own mind at least?

TI: "I see myself as established, but I never feel as though I am too advanced not to be able to learn. For example, at Thruxton on the Friday before the meeting, I was in the race truck all morning going through data, looking at onboards, trying to work out what I can do better. So yes, I see myself as established and I see myself as one of the more experienced and calmer heads, perhaps, but actually I am happy to still be told what to do and be given areas to improve on. I always tell the team to never assume that I know things: I always want information and I always want to know what is going on to help push myself forward. I like to still be learning from bits of info all the time.

"I always do my research by looking at all the onboards. I don't do reports after each meeting because that is not the way I learn things. I am better at doing things."

Question: If you could pick a different car to race in the BTCC which one would you pick and tell us why?
Katie Abbott
Via Facebook

TI: "Naturally, I would like to try a rear-wheel-drive car, because I have not raced one before. I grew up with that format through karting and Ginettas. Rear-wheel drive is completely natural for me. I do a lot of historic racing and I enjoy that, so a rear-driven car would be on the tick list. There are two incredibly quick rear-wheel-drive cars on the BTCC grid this year [Infiniti and BMW] that would be great to have a try-out in.

"Going back, it would be a Ford Sierra RS500 but I would want to do it around the streets of Birmingham. I have watched that on video, and it looks so cool. The jeopardy of it just looks amazing. You suddenly get a whack of turbo boost as you are over a bump and you are trying to change gear. It just looks phenomenal.

"You could go back even further than that to [inaugural champion] Jack Sears' days. Think of the big old American bangers. I love the historic stuff with Marco Attard. I have raced his Lotus Cortina and his Chevrolet Corvette Stingray and it is a real pleasure. They are awesome fun."

Question: Who would you most trust going side-by-side around Church corner at Thruxton [the quickest turn on the BTCC calendar] with?
Emma Facey
Via email

TI: "Good question. Looking back, I would have said Dan Cammish. We always raced hard but fair, and I have an enormous amount of respect for him. I think it is criminal that he is not on the grid this year, because he totally deserves to be.

"This year, I think Dan Rowbottom has done an amazing job so far. I think he is driving really well and I would happily go wheel-to-wheel with him.

"I would never let anyone come around the outside of me coming through Church, and if they did, they would be on the grass and I would expect that from anyone else if I tried it on them. I would expect it. But there are some people that you certainly wouldn't go side-by-side with because you know you would be off."

Question: Do you see yourself as a new type of driver with the way you go about sourcing your funding and looking after your sponsors?
Jack Crowther
Via email

TI: "There is a totally different way of going racing these days. You don't just put a sticker on a car in exchange for some cash, and my girlfriend Laura [Drysdale] works harder than me at generating the funds. There is a much bigger picture at play and it is a different market than it was even 25 years ago.

"You genuinely need to show value for what you do, and Laura and I work full time at this. This is what I do, I am a touring car driver. Between her and I, and she is incredible in the work she puts in behind the scenes is incredible, and I think her and I make a bloody good team."

MN: You are quite skilful at it but not every driver has that ability…

TI: "If a driver feels that they have been hard done by because they haven't forced an opportunity or no-one comes knocking on their door, I think that is just laziness. It is not a difficult thing to do, but you just need to be persistent and resilient when people say no to you.

"I was 15 years old when I was going around and getting sponsorship. I was going to breakfast meetings with the local businesses. I would go around and talk to them and try to drag up £5000, £1500 or anything I could. It all helped.

"I remember at the end of 2010 and going into 2011, I didn't have a drive three weeks before the start of the season because I didn't have any money. I went to my local business networking event and did a talk to about 100 local businesses. I had my crash helmet.

"I passed my crash helmet around at the end of the presentation and told them I wanted to go racing and asked them to back me and asked them to write the amount that they wanted to put towards my career, write it on the back of a business card and pop it into the crash helmet. There was a bit of peer pressure and everyone was looking around and were thinking 'well, I can't not give him anything'. I raised £20,000 that day and that got me to the first race of the season, which I won, and then they started to put in more money and I got through."

MN: Do you get as big of a buzz from

"I still think I have plenty to learn about racing"
Tom Ingram

Ingram's first races in the BTCC in 2014 were the school of hard knocks

Sharing the joy with the fans: First BTCC podium at Rockingham

Learning from the master: Ingram and Plato in 2015

The was last-gasp heart-break at Brands in 2018

The Speedworks Toyota Corolla was a seven-time winner

landing a sponsor as you do for driving a race car?

TI: "Laura and I are very similar in our attitude to this. When the deal is done, there is a buzz, but we are never actually satisfied. Once the deal is done, we are always looking as to what is next. We have probably missed a lot of good celebrations and drinks because we are thinking ahead, thinking about the next things we can do."

Question: What advice would you give you young up-and-coming drivers about using social media?

Russell Scobbie
Via email

TI: "Just be yourself. People like the real you. People don't actually like the fake you. People get far more value out of seeing what you are like as a person as opposed to any character you might want to play.

"There is a reason loads of people like Daniel Ricciardo. He has his opinions like everyone should have, but it is slightly tongue in cheek and what you see with Ricciardo is what you get. He is a normal person.

"To a certain degree, that is me too. I am the same on camera as I am off it. I don't change, and people like the real person and I think more people need to be like that. As for social media, just use common sense and racers have to know that that is where their brand is. If you wanted to be the Frankie Boyle of the BTCC paddock, then be that but don't expect everyone to like you and expect some backlash from that."

Question: What is the strangest thing a fan has ever sent you as a gift?

Phil Swaffer
Via email

TI: "A nappy. I had a massive moment at Thruxton one year and someone sent me that in case it happened again and I needed to use one in the future. Bizarre…"

Question: What happens when you eventually win the BTCC? What's next?

Jonathan Astbury
Via email

TI: "I will win it again. I don't want to be satisfied by winning it once. I want to be in the BTCC when I am 50 – well, either that or sat on a beach in Barbados. I want to win more titles than anyone else.

"Yes I would like to go and do other things at some point but I am not actively pushing for it. If someone came along with a million quid to go and do Supercars in Australia, then I would think about that. But I would weigh it up with what is happening in the BTCC. My roots and my foundations are here in the UK. Some people don't look at the bigger picture. Yes, you do need to live in the present but equally you need to have some sorts of foundations."

MN: What about a Le Mans outing or something like that?

TI: "I would happily do it, of course, but I am not interested in these one- or two-year deals. They don't do anything for me. There is no security in that.

"I couldn't relax or sleep at night knowing that. What I have done in the BTCC is put the foundations of a house down, and we keeping building it up and putting the bricks down each season – and then, in 30 years' time, I will have a complete house.

I am not interested in trying to build a house overnight and then don't do it properly and watch the wind knock it down." ■

Ingram battled to the end for the 2018 British Touring Car Championship in his Toyota Avensis

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COLUMNIST

DAVID ADDISON

MN's columnist-at-large reflects on a busy summer at the microphone

Photos: Colin Casserley, SRC

Spa was a stand-out for Addison

July and August are two of those months that have many positives. The way the calendar falls, there is a greater spread of variety in one's weekend activity and the fact that many of the events are three days or more means Mrs A is delighted as she has the house to herself. Again.

So rewind to the start of July and a first trip to Misano for the GT World Challenge Europe. Two lively races were the short story but of greater concern was the track limit problem, with Misano being another of those circuits that needs to accommodate cars and bikes, plus trucks, and hence it has to have low kerbs for the two-wheeled brigade.

So, to stop people using the kerbs to their advantage, these so-called yellow bananas have been placed behind many of the kerbs to try to keep people within the confines of the track. So far, so good. Trouble is that if you do run wide, or worse get forced wide by a car alongside, you rattle over these kerbs and they can damage a car.

Drivers asked race officials to remove them but rightly were told that the circuit licence was issued on the basis that the yellow bananas were in place. Remove them, track licence void. Can't do it. And so they stayed and on the opening lap of the first one-hour race, Adrian de Leener ran wide in the pack and these infernal kerbs acted as a ramp and the net result as he crash-landed was a cracked chassis of the car and fractured vertebrae for the driver. To say that he should have avoided the kerbs is too flippant a retort and to have elements to a circuit that can injure someone seems criminal. Surely, *surely*, in this modern day of technology and indeed health and safety gone mad, we can come up with a better solution than this?

Fast-forward a few days to Silverstone and the British Grand Prix. What a weekend. Ignore the Max Verstappen/Lewis Hamilton clash for a moment, there were plenty of other aspects to embrace.

Friday's crowd was a monster and a stunning atmosphere ensued, the biggest cheers being reserved for George Russell, while the Sprint Race – sorry, Sprint Qualifying – added an extra dimension to the weekend. OK, the FIA's F2 or F3 policy meant that we lost out on FIA F3 this year, and the Porsche Supercup was axed thanks to Germany's attitude to being people being in the Covid petri dish that she perceived Britain to be. Ho hum… As for the race, part one was dull, part two a zinger as Hamilton overcame his 10-second inconvenience to snatch the win from Charles Leclerc who did a superb job but couldn't outpace the flying Mercedes.

A week later came British GT at Spa and the 24 Hours a week later, the perfect trip for fans of Belgian beer. I mean GT cars. The 24 hours will perhaps be remembered for the monster shunt that claimed Jack Aitken's Lamborghini but it was Alessandro Pier Guidi's round-the-outside move to take the lead that was the highlight for me.

Next: a rare trip to Skegness for the BriSCA F1 World Semi-Final. Tom Harris starred as he dominated the semi, but there was some mega racing all night from the F1s and Saloon Stock Cars and one had to feel for Nigel Green who was penalised from his F1 Final win after he lined up as a red not a star grader. Yes, he was in the wrong and the official view was that it was down to him to line up in the correct place. True, possibly, but why can't officials line cars up in grid order before releasing them on track? One thing that oval racing always reminds you is how 'A Show' can be included into the sport. The spectacular double chequered flag waving is in stark contrast to the drab, bored effort that prevails in circuit racing and is surely something that could copy for major televised races?

And then…Le Mans. I don't get to go every year and each visit is a pleasure, this year's reduced crowd gave it a far more relaxed atmosphere. It was not, I am sure, good for the Automobile Club de l'Ouest's coffers, but it did make working life easier. As for the race, as ever there was plenty to talk about but the reliability of the hypercars was fascinating. All the fears about them spending chunks of time in the pits allowing LMP2 cars a chance to shine came to nought, but the LMP2 battle itself was a stunner as it raged to the wire.

What's next? There is another bag to be packed first…

Misano threw up issues with trackside kerbs

Skegness played host to the BriSCA F1 show

"Short oval racing reminds us all that motorsport can be a show"

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FEATURE

Teenage dream: Bearman has swept all before him in 2021

BEWARE OF THE BEAR

The 16-year-old Brit Ollie Bearman has been piling up victories across three junior single-seater categories this year, so Graham Keilloh found out more

Bearman in 2021 has usually been found at the front of the grid

Ollie Bearman was confident heading into his debut GB3 championship weekend at Brands Hatch earlier this year. Yes, it was his first race weekend in the since-rebranded BRDC British Formula 3; his first indeed at F3 level. But he'd done plenty of testing and had shown up well therein against his quick Fortec team-mates.

Yet the 16-year-old Briton had a problem. This was the first time he would drive in anger on Brands' GP circuit, as the previous day's testing was on the Indy track. And the 20-minute qualifying session would be the first time he'd drive the famous-but-fearsome layout on slicks.

But you'd never have known it. In the short sharp session he qualified second, and might even have taken top spot had he put on a full new set of tyres late on.

Bearman tells Motorsport News: "I'm always up to speed fast which is really good to have especially in categories where you don't necessarily get a lot of track time. I always feel like I'm 99% there and just need to work on the finer details. In F4 we have a lot of testing so it's not necessarily needed but I'd say in different categories then it would be."

His Fortec boss Richard Dutton concurs on Bearman: "He's very quick; it seems to be very easy for him to be quick, he doesn't need to work too hard at it, he can just do it at will. He's a very impressive kid."

And GB3 isn't even Bearman's primary focus this year. Rather it's something he pops into when his full Italian and ADAC – that's in Germany – Formula 4 campaigns with Van Amersfoort Racing allow him a spare weekend.

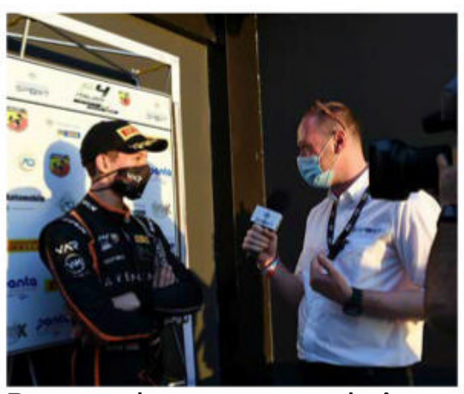
Bearman explains: "Obviously I [am] quite busy with my commitments out in Europe but whenever I can we come over. I'd say it's good practice for whatever I'll be driving in the future because it's a bit more power and a bit more downforce than the F4 car so it changes the way you race; changes the way you drive the car. It's good to be able to adapt from the F4 to the GB3 and back to the F4 again, so it's good practice as well."

Bearman indeed is one not inclined to compromise on his development, something reflected in that he's chosen two mainland European F4 championships to compete in rather than his homeland equivalent.

"Yeah it seems obvious to go and race in the UK but to be honest the British F4 championship isn't as high profile as the European championships," Bearman continues.

"You see a lot more F1 junior drivers put into those championships rather than the British one because it's a different car and also you get to race on more tracks that you'll probably end up racing in the future."

Bearman was back in GB3 for its Snetterton meeting last month and again in changeable conditions he took another pole and win, with luck costing him further results that weekend.



Bearman has won new admirers

And Bearman's statistics for the year by now read like something from boys' own fiction rather than sane modern motorsport fact.

In Italian F4 he has eight wins from 12: all of the last eight in a row. In ADAC F4 he has four wins from six, including a 100% record in non-reversed-grid races. While in GB3 from three meetings he's taken a win, three other podium finishes and two poles. And without a radiator problem at Snetterton then a wheel detaching at Silverstone, plus being caught out by a late rain shower in the Norfolk meeting, his stats therein would look much more impressive.

"He's definitely super-naturally talented for sure," Dutton adds, "he is very very good. I would say he's one of the best new young British talents for sure.

"Qualifying [at Silverstone] was impressive because he was on slicks and it was raining, and he stuck it on the pole. [He's a] really quick learner, learns really fast. When the conditions are difficult is when he really excels."

Remember too that – in something else likely to stop Bearman's stats being even more towering – in GB3 and ADAC F4 one third of the races start with a reversed grid. But even

"He's one of the best Fortec has worked with"

Richard Dutton

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, ADAC, ACI Sport

Bearman is dominating in Italy and Germany

Bearman took second on grid in first slick session on Brands GP loop

BEARMAN'S BRILLIANT 2021

ITALIAN F4

- *12 races*
- *8 wins*
- *3 other podiums*
- *5 poles (from 8)*

ADAC F4

- *6 races*
- *4 wins*
- *3 poles (from 4)*

GB3

- *9 races*
- *1 win*
- *3 other podiums*
- *2 poles (from 6)*

* Stats correct as of end of August 2021

Starts are now Bearman strength after focus

He has a lucky 13 wins (so far)

in those Bearman shows his wares.

"My racecraft is quite strong, we saw in the reversed-grid races in the GB3 championship I have always come through," Bearman notes. "I made up nine spots at Brands which is notoriously difficult to overtake, I think it was 11 at Silverstone and a further 10 at Snetterton had I not have been caught out by the rain.

"I think I'm quite a clever driver, I think I usually put my car in the right spots. I try my best to be clever with it and balance risk and reward, not take any unnecessary risks, especially in F4 where I'm fighting for the championship. We have reversed-grid races in the German championship so in Zandvoort I was starting eighth because it's top-eight reverse and I managed to finish fourth. I made a lot of overtakes but also I didn't take many risks which is important because you still need to consolidate points."

This is Bearman's second year in car racing, having like everyone else experienced a pushed-up Covid-impacted 2020, in his case sampling ADAC and Italian F4 with US Racing. But that's not the only way things have improved this year for Bearman.

"The pace was always there from the start," he recalls of his first car campaign.

He's shown racecraft in pack too

"For my first race I was on the front row so I was never slow, but I just lacked a bit of racecraft. I think I finished in the points once in the first race weekend from two front-row starts so that's not quite how you want it to end but the positives that we took is the pace was always strong and that I was learning as I went, and it got better all year.

"My weak point in 2020 were my starts and first laps were always quite weak, but this year I've worked on it and it's a particular strength of mine. So it was a really good learning year and I wouldn't change it.

"I spend a lot of time on the simulator, I work with my driver coach, we do some racecraft training, which can help, also on first laps. But mostly my starts have improved a lot, we have a slightly different procedure with my new team and it seems to really work."

Indeed for all the talk of Bearman's natural ability, he is someone with sharp focus on improvement as well as on living the holistic life of a 'one percenter' operating at the top of a sport, something perhaps easier for a self-confessed "petrolhead" who was bitten by the motorsport bug as a young child watching his dad compete in club racing.

Bearman continues: "I had a bit of a slow start at Paul Ricard [Italian F4's 2021 season-opener], but we've worked on everything that needed working on after that weekend and haven't looked back since. Qualifying is a particular strength of ours so [I'm] looking to keep it up.

"We're always working and it's easy to get complacent and that's something that we make sure that we don't do because we need to work twice as hard as the people who are trying to catch us."

Even on his afore-mentioned ability to get up to speed quickly, Bearman still displays analytical caution. "It's a strength but it can also be a weakness that you start making mistakes and throwing it off the circuit so you need to be careful that you don't overdo it," he observes.

And what Dutton now sees is something close to a driver with everything. "He's a very intelligent kid, he learns fast, he's good to work with, no issues at all," Dutton says. "There's no side to him that really needs [improving], his fitness is good, his approach is very good, so yeah he's a complete package.

"He seems pretty in control, he's not out of control at all. He got caught out at Snetterton because it rained on one corner, he'd come through on the reversed-grid race and he was catching the leader pretty quickly. But we've had no incidents other than that with him at all."

Bearman is open-minded about what's next. "There's no path in mind," he says, "you've got to take it as it comes. The goal would be to have a career in motorsport whatever I can, but the focus is on now and that'll be better for my future that I keep performing now and then hopefully that can open some more doors for next season and more seasons in the future.

"Obviously the goal would be to go to F1 via the standard F3-F2-F1 route but a lot of things have to fall into place and it's not cheap. If that's not possible then a career in anything is viable. I watched the Le Mans race and it seems like something I would love to be a part of but the focus is on staying in single-seaters and trying to get up the ladder."

Dutton for one believes Bearman shouldn't temper his ambitions. "He's certainly one of the most exciting young British drivers out there at the moment. He's definitely one of the best [Fortec has worked with].

"I would think he's got a big career in front of him whatever he does. He'll be in single-seaters for a while I'm sure." ■

Brands Hatch GP: How did he do that?

That Brands Hatch qualifying. Where Ollie Bearman for his first time on the GP loop on slicks during his debut BRDC British Formula 3 weekend, within a 20-minute session immediately stuck his car a close second on the grid. How exactly did he do it?

He tells Motorsport News: "On the Friday we did a day round the Indy circuit so I learnt basically the first three corners and the rest is different. But I learnt how the tyres last round there because it's relatively the same track surface.

"And then on the Saturday morning we had a 20-minute warm up in the wet conditions, drying throughout. Because the GP track doesn't get used there's hardly any rubber down so it's quite different in terms of lines to the Indy circuit. And then I went straight into quali in the dry."

That session was stopped halfway through, something Bearman worked to his advantage. "It meant I could have time to consolidate what I'd done and I knew where to improve," he recalls.

"When you have a little break like that, you can rest a bit and think 'I can carry a bit more speed there' or 'get a better exit there', some things like that, because I was losing the most time in the middle sector.

"Before the red flag I was P10 or something quite awful. [But] I knew the lap was in there somewhere, I put it half together and made a few mistakes. It was only a 20-minute session so I had to get there fast and by doing that you make mistakes.

"So after the red flag we took new tyres on the left and went out again and I did the best I could with what I had. I was really happy to be on the front row for my first time round that track."

Getting experience of senior tracks is a bonus from continental F4

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

RACING REPORTS

Photos: Paul Lawrence

OULTON PARK: GOLD CUP BY PAUL LAWRENCE — AUGUST 29

Ready for the off: The Guards Trophy battle pack

Andy Newall eventually topped the Guards pack in his beautiful Chevron B6

NEWALL ON TOP IN THE GUARDS TROPHY AS THE GOLD CUP KICKS INTO LIFE

Andy Newall was one of the stars of Sunday's element of the Oulton Park Gold Cup, as he added a fourth Guards Trophy victory to this season's unbroken run in his Chevron B6.

However, in qualifying when he was spinning backwards across the track on the exit of Cascades, another win was the furthest thing from Newall's mind. Somehow he avoided disaster and escaped with a few bodywork grazes on the B6, but it was a close-run thing.

In Sunday's 45-minute race Newall set the early pace as Ben Tusting took up the fight in the family Lenham. "I used my head for once," said Newall, knowing that once Tusting handed the Lenham over to his father, Robert, the Chevron would be able to press home its advantage. That became apparent on the first lap after the pitstops when Tusting Sr spun the Lenham and lost nearly half a minute.

Newall was away and gone and controlled the later pace of the race. As he short-shifted with concerns over engine temperature, up into a fine second came father-and-son Westie and Ben Mitchell, with Ben being a late substitute for his Covid-isolating brother Sam. A series of race fastest laps in the final stages showed Ben's pace and second place further extended their 100% podium record with the left-hand drive B8. Jason and Guy Minshaw put their B8 up to third as the Tusting Lenham slipped to fifth behind the B8 of Mark Colman.

The Paul Simms Trophy for Historic Formula Fords went to double-winner Tom McArthur who used all of his local knowledge and natural pace to keep his Titan Mk4 ahead of the Merlyns of Callum Grant and Horatio Fitz-Simon. In the opener, McArthur edged away as Grant and Fitz-Simon battled for second. Later in the afternoon, it was a tremendous three-way battle and Grant did much of the leading but it was McArthur who just had a nose in front when it mattered to clinch a double victory.

Clive Richards was a commanding double winner in Formula Junior in his Lotus 22 and romped clear in both races. Mark Shaw should have been a contender in his Brabham BT6 but found oil on the opening lap and, after two major moments, pitted to have the car checked over. Shaw later led the chase of Richards in the second race.

Andrew Smith was the class of the opening Historic Formula 2 race and won at a canter in his March 742 as Miles Griffiths (Ralt RT1) and Matthew Watts (March 782) led the chase. Callum Grant was an impressive fourth in his significantly less powerful Formula Atlantic March 79B. Matt Wrigley started his March 782 from the back and made a dozen places in six corners, only to be bumped to the back again by an early red flag. From the restart, Wrigley was soon in trouble, as disappearing oil pressure signalled major engine woes.

The Aurora Trophy and Classic Formula 3 race was shortened by more oil but it was Mark Dwyer who was in command from the start in his F2 March 742. Best of the F3 pack was Andrew Smith, doubling up in his March 783 shortly after taking F2 victory.

Both Road Sports races offered battles all the way down the order from bumper grids and in the Historic division it was Kevin Kivlochan who got the early jump on his old adversary John Davison as AC Cobra bettered Lotus Elan.

In the 70s Road Sports race Will Plant was always in control in his Morgan +8 and retook control over the Lotus Europa of Jim Dean after a mid-race safety car. Unfortunately, a last-lap tangle eliminated Kivlochan, this time in his Morgan +8, Charles Barter (Datsun 240Z) and Dave Karaskas (TVR 3000M).

The opening Historic F3 race was a cracker even though title-contender Jeremy Timms romped away early on and stayed clear of the park. The big interest was on a glorious contest for a second place as Ian Bankhurst, Christoph Widmer and Simon Armer battled mightily for lap after lap. They raced wheel-to-wheel, changed places and diced furiously in a thoroughly entertaining contest. In the later stages, Widmer squeezed ahead but into Old Hall for the last time, Bankhurst dived down the inside in his Alexis in a decisive move. Widmer rechallenged around the final lap but that only served to give Armer the chance he needed to sneak his March 703 ahead of the Swiss racer's Brabham BT18.

● *The remainder of the Gold Cup report will be in next week's Motorsport News*

Andrew Smith was the man in form at Oulton Park in the Historic F2 counter

Historic FF1600 wins went to Titan man Tom McArthur

RACE WINNERS

Historic FF1600
Races 1 & 2: Tom McArthur (Titan Mk4)

Historic Formula Junior
Races 1 & 2: Clive Richards (Lotus 22)

Historic Road Sports
Kevin Kivlochan (AC Cobra)

Historic Formula 2
Andrew Smith (March 742)

70s Road Sports
Will Plant (Morgan +8)

Aurora Trophy/ Classic F3
Mark Dwyer (March 742)

Guards Trophy
Andy Newall (Chevron B6)

Historic Formula 3
Jeremy Timms (Chevron B15)

Mark Dwyer avoided the oil to take the Aurora triumph

RACING REPORTS

Photos: mkpics.net

NATIONAL HOT RODS: HEDNESFORD BY GRAHAM BROWN — AUGUST 29

Waller-Barrett fends off Wood and Haird

Mikey Godfrey made good his escape in the second heat at Hednesford

WALLER-BARRETT'S THRILLER FINAL IN THE HILLS

Carl Waller-Barrett crowned a great afternoon of racing at Hendensford Hills Raceway by taking the final in a nail-biting three-way battle that lasted fully half the race.

The double European champion eventually claimed the honours by just 0.044 seconds over Chris Haird and Billy Wood from a dice that was never resolved until they passed the chequers.

Neil Muddle was first away in the opening heat chased by Brett Collison and Mark Shelper, with Shelper swiftly going to the front as they exited the East bend. Shelper opened out a big lead within a couple of laps but even that didn't look like it was going to get him the win once Waller-Barrett, Paul Wright and a host of other fast movers had broken through to the places.

CW-B took the lead just before mid-distance, leaving Shelper defending second against the combined efforts of Wright and Haird, all three nearly coming to grief in a dramatic three-wide moment. Wright escaped from the clinch with second place before losing out to Haird once he too was past Shelper.

The leader looked to be home and dry with two laps to go but that was before Muddle blew his engine up, smothering the track with oil and causing a very late caution. The lengthy clear up and superfluous one-lap sprint finish left the unchanged order as Waller-Barrett, Haird and Wright.

Collison led the second encounter but quickly lost the lead to the fast-starting Mikey Godfrey. While Godfrey concentrated on putting the Mazda as far up the road as possible the places battle revolved around Shelper once again, who this time was dicing with Shane Bland and Haird before getting swamped by about half the field. Haird was the one to make the most capital out of that and was soon joined by Wood as they chased down the leader.

Once they caught Godfrey, a struggle ensued that lasted the rest of the race with Haird inching in front around the outside only to have Godfrey get ahead again in the turns while Wood desperately looked for an opening that might get him past both of them.

They crossed the line separated by just 0.11s but still – just – in the same order.

Anyone who thought heat two was as good as it gets had another thing coming.

With the quickest men starting up front for the final, the drag race to turn one immediately put the main protagonists into the first three places, Waller-Barrett leading Haird and Wood into the first lap. Wood managed to slip past Haird along the back straight and rapidly reeled the leader in, helped by Waller-Barrett already encountering traffic. In fact, he nearly came to grief dealing with backmarkers, Wood seizing the opportunity to pressure even more. But CW-B survived until they were back on open road although now, as the race moved beyond half distance, Haird was starting to catch them again.

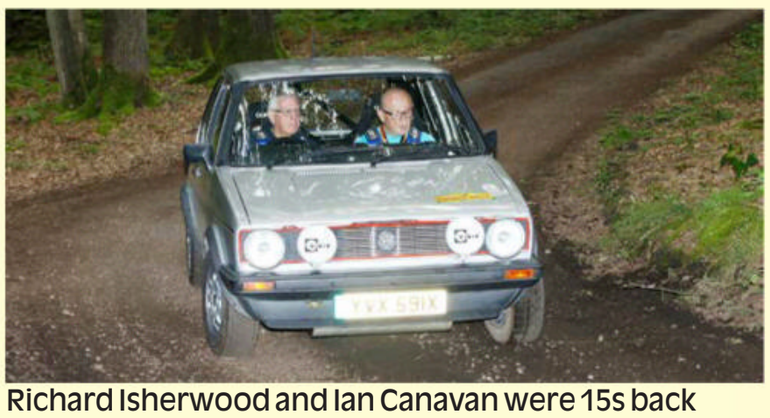
Once the three came together, it became the hardest of hard-fought lead battles with nothing between the trio. With the lap boards out, Wood tried to haul himself round the outside of the leader, immediately opening up the inside line for Haird. Waller-Barrett and Wood were side by side repeatedly and there was still only a cigarette paper between them as they raced under the flag, just about half a lap ahead of the next best, Perry Cooke.

Results

Organiser: Incarace **When:** August 29
Where: Hednesford Hills Raceway
Starters: 29
Heat one: 1 Carl Waller-Barrett (Vauxhall Tigra); 2 Chris Haird (Vauxhall Tigra); 3 Paul Wright (Vauxhall Tigra); 4 Gavin Murray (Vauxhall Tigra); 5 Shane Bland (Ford Fiesta); 6 Jason Kew (Ginetta G40R); 7 Gordon Alexander (Vauxhall Tigra); 8 Billy Wood (Vauxhall Tigra). **Heat two:** 1 Mikey Godfrey (Mazda RX-8); 2 Haird; 3 Wood; 4 Bradley Dynes (Vauxhall Tigra); 5 Wright; 6 Waller-Barrett; 7 Perry Cooke (Vauxhall Tigra); 8 Alexander. **Final:** 1 Waller-Barrett; 2 Wood; 3 Haird; 4 Cooke; 5 Murray; 6 Kew; 7 Wright; 8 Rob McDonald (Vauxhall Tigra); 9 Alexander; 10 Aaron Dew (Ginetta G40R). **Points:** Wood 140; 2 Ivan Grayson 131; 3 Dew 130; 4 Cooke 124; 5 Alexander 109; 6 Waller-Barrett 101.

HUGHES HISTORIC RALLY: HRCR BY MARTIN PHAFF — AUGUST 21

Photo: Andy Manston



Richard Isherwood and Ian Canavan were 15s back

Owen and Bloxham were on fine form in Kent

PORSCHE CREW TAME THE HUGHES TESTS

Stephen Owens and Nick Bloxham took a popular win in their immaculate Porsche 911 on the Hughes Rally from Richard Isherwood and Ian Canavan Volkswagen Golf GTi with Ken and Sarah Binstead's MGB third.

While Bloxham has won as a driver on his own, the event provided the pair with their first win together on a championship rally after eight years of trying.

The event started from the Moat at Wrotham and, after a short run out, crews were pitched straight into a nine-mile Regularity section in Mereworth Woods.

Regularities on private land always prove challenging with erratic penalties being earned throughout the field. The initial advantage went to Ian Crammond/Matt Vokes (Merc 280SL) on 11 seconds, followed by Paul Crosby/Ali Procter's Porsche 911 on 25 and Owens/Bloxham on 26

Regularity 2 started immediately and ran from Plaxtol to Pembury Hall. Owens/Bloxham were top from the Binsteads and Hugh Garnish/David Bell's Peugeot 205. A number of crews missed code boards among them Crammond/Vokes, Crosby/Procter and Harvey Steele/Martin Pitt (Volvo 144).

Regularity 3 was initially difficult to plot and featured 13 speed changes in 12 miles. Roger Fildes/Dan Middle's MGB took top spot with Stuart and Emily Anderson second on 30, the father/daughter crew in their trusty 1937 four-litre open-topped Bentley.

The First visit to Hole Park followed for Test 1, which was won by James Griffiths/James Howell's Mini 1275GT followed by Peter Joy/Matthew Fowle in their 1959 Lotus Elite. One more Regularity won by Michael Helm/Jim Bowie's Triumph TR6 just two seconds ahead of the Andersons' Bentley.

On the return to Hole Park just before lunch honours were shared by an eclectic mix of cars: Crosby/Procter's Porsche, Joy/Fowle and novices John King/Andy Fowler (Toyota MR2) tied at the top.

Comfortably topping the results at lunch were the Binsteads with their MGB looking a little scarred following two separate excursions into the trees in Mereworth Woods.

A final Tarmac test at Hole Park went to the Porsches: Crosby/Procter were one second quicker than Owens/Bloxham.

On the second Regularity, frontrunners Griffiths/Howell (Mini) retired with steering arm failure and eventual winners Owens/Bloxham hit trouble with a puncture. The section was won by Rod Hanson/Clare Grove's Ford Escort.

Regularity 6 was written as a descriptive, but the route was simple enough to plot on the map top seeds Crammond/Vokes and Crosby/Procter fought this out, the former winning. A final Regularity to the east of Paddock Wood brought crews back to Mereworth Woods and was won by Peter Engel/Mark Dunkerley VW Golf.

Five test finished off the event an Owens/Bloxham held their nerve for a popular victory.

Results

Hughes Historic Rally
Organiser: Balckpalfrey Motor Club of Kent **When:** August 21 **Where:** Kent
Starters: 46.
1 Stephen Owens/Nick Bloxham (Porsche 911) 16m58s; 2 Richard Isherwood/Ian Canavan (VW Golf GTi) +15s; 3 Ken Binstead/Sarah Binstead (MGB); 4 Peter Joy/Matt Fowle (Lotus Elite); 5 Paul Crosby/Ali Procter (Porsche 911); 6 Ian Crammond/Matt Vokes (Mercedes 280SL); 7 Hugh Garnis/David Bell (Peugeot 205 GTi); 8 Harvey Steele/Martin Pitt (Volvo 144); 9 Tony Jardine/Martin Phaff (Lancia Fulvia); 10 Rod Hanson/Clare Grove (Ford Escort).
Class winners: Experts: Binstead/Binstead (MGB); Novices: Dominic Hodge/Peter Raine (VW Golf GTi); Clubmans: Colin Woodhouse/Rhys Williams (Rover 25)

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

RACING REPORTS

Photos: Gary Hawkins

BRANDS HATCH: CSCC BY STEFAN MACKLEY — AUGUST 28-29

Alex Taylor was in command in the Modern Classic thrash

Davis inherited the win in the Magnificent Sevens after safety car dramas

KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY FOR THE SMITHS IN SLICKS SERIES

Father-and-son duo Mark Smith and Arran Moulton-Smith took top spot in the Slicks Series contest at Brands Hatch, the Classic Sports Car Club supporting the GT World Challenge.

An early pitstop in the 40-minute race on the GP layout and some decisive overtakes by Moulton-Smith propelled the duo's BMW M3 E36 Evo into second before they capitalised on a continuous loss of power for long-time leaders Kevin Clarke and Mathew Evans' M3. Colin Tester/Hugh Gurney (M3) and Peter Seldon (M3) took victories in the concurrent New Millennium and Open Series categories respectively.

Seldon took a sensational second on the road in the Turbo Tin Tops/Modern Classics race having started from the pits, but was disqualified post-race for overtaking behind the safety car. He and Alan Thompson (M3) moved into contention for the win after making their mandatory stops under the caution period, rejoining behind erstwhile leader and eventual winner Alex Taylor in his Mazda RX-7. Early leader Stuart Daburn was promoted to third after Seldon's disqualification, his TVR Tuscan Challenge losing almost an entire lap due to the safety car's appearance. Turbo Tin Tops honours went to Keith Issatt's Mini Clubman.

The deployment of the safety car turned the Future Classics/Swinging 60s (Group 2) contest into a farce, as the majority of the field sat stationary at the end of the pitlane for more than a minute while a small train of cars circulated around the track. The chaotic scene allowed Perry Waddams to pit in his Tuscan and retain the lead having stopped later than the majority of the field. Tim Bates' Porsche 911 SC took second, with Raymond Barrow's Chevrolet Camaro third and top Swinging 60s runner.

Despite only one Special Saloons and Modsports race taking place due to a timetable revision after barriers were damaged in an earlier race, it proved to be one of the best encounters of the weekend. Polesitter Rod Birley (BMW E36) led initially before Wayne Crabtree took the coveted position as a four-car train formed at the front. A collision with a backmarker put Crabtree's Ford RS200 out, with Sam Wilson eventually taking the win in an Aston Martin Vantage. Danny Morris took a popular second aboard his Peugeot 309 GTi after Andy Southcott's MG Modsport blew up on the final bend, his rostrum finish coming in the event named after his late brother Ricky Parker-Morris.

Graeme Langford/Michael Whitaker took a comprehensive win in the Classic K and Swinging 60s Group 1 race, their TVR Griffith finishing more than 17s ahead of Mel Taylor/Ben Cater (Lotus Elan S1 GTS).

Chris Pittard lost any hope of a Magnificent Sevens victory after doing an extra lap behind the safety car before making his pitstop, leaving the way clear for Tim Davies.

RACE WINNERS

Slick Series/New Millennium/Open Series
Mark Smith/Arran Moulton-Smith (BMW M3 E36 Evo)

Special Saloons/Modsports
Sam Wilson (Aston Martin Vantage)

Turbo Tin Tops/Modern Classics
Alex Taylor (Mazda RX-7)

Classic K/Swinging 60s (Group 1)
Graeme Langford/Michael Whitaker (TVR Griffith)

Future Classics/Swinging 60s (Group 2)
Perry Waddams (TVR Tuscan Challenge)

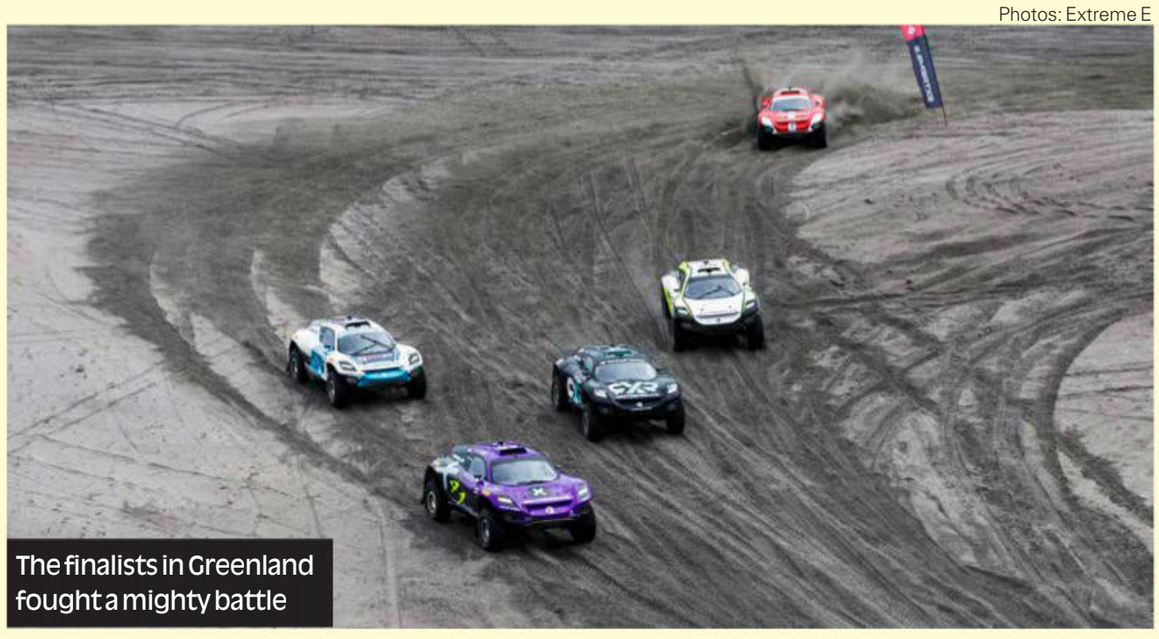
Magnificent Sevens
Tim Davis (Caterham C400)

Langford and Whitaker won in their TVR

EXTREME E: ARCTIC X PRIX BY HAL RIDGE — AUGUST 28-29

Photos: Extreme E

Hansen (l) and Munning celebrate a tough victory


The finalists in Greenland fought a mighty battle

HANSEN AND MUNNINGS BREAK NEW GROUND

British driver Catie Munnings and Swedish team-mate Timmy Hansen claimed victory in the first-ever motorsport event to be held in Greenland, the Arctic X Prix, which hosted the third round of the Extreme E campaign.

The Andretti United pairing fought back after difficulties in qualifying to win their semi-final. Munnings took an early lead at the start of the final until being overtaken by nine-time World Rally champion Sebastien Loeb.

Munnings also dropped behind series leader Molly Taylor in the Rosberg X Racing entry. The Australian was bouncing back after rolling the car in Q1 on Saturday, a lap after team-mate Johan Kristoffersson had been stopped by technical issues.

Munnings and Taylor ran close to the end of the first tour of the final, behind Lewis Hamilton's X44 team driver Loeb, but the Frenchman was delayed in the Switch Zone by a punctured right-rear tyre.

While the squad rushed to change the wheel on the ODYSSEY 21 all-electric machine, Timmy Hansen took the lead for the Andretti United squad, chased by World Rallycross Championship rival Kristoffersson.

The rallycross duo raced side-by-side over some of the biggest jumps on the course, but after a heavy landing Kristoffersson's car was slowed by a technical problem and Hansen drove to victory.

In a near repeat of the Swedish World RX round a week earlier, Hansen's younger brother Kevin, driving for the JBXE team for a second-straight XE event in place of team owner Jenson Button, finished second together with team-mate Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinsky. They had rebounded following difficulties on the opening day, including breaking the car's steering and having to graduate to the final through the Crazy Race.

Acciona Sainz team duo Carlos Sainz and Laia Sanz finished in third place in the final. X44 was fourth and the RXR team finished fifth, but still leads the standings.

At the finish, Munnings said: "I have literally no words. At the start of the weekend in Qualifying 1 we thought we'll just go with it and see but we never imagined we'd come out on top so it's a really special feeling.

"Timmy is a really incredible team-mate, I learn so much from him, he's such a good driver and obviously he always pulls it out of the bag so it's really cool to be working alongside him. It's the first motorsport event to come to Greenland so it's incredible that it's at this level.

"I'm also really proud of how far we've come as a team especially from Senegal where we didn't have a brilliant result so to come back now, it gives us a really good feeling going into the Island X Prix [in Sardinia]."

Fellow British driver Oliver Bennett suffered a torrid weekend with the Xite Energy Racing squad that culminated with more issues in the Crazy Race and they didn't make the final.

Results

Extreme E, round 3: (All ODYSSEY 21) 1 Andretti United (Timmy Hansen/Catie Munnings) 2 laps; 2 JBXE (Kevin Hansen/Mikaela Ahlin-Kottulinsky) +4.159s; 3 Acciona Sainz (Carlos Sainz/Laia Sanz) +22.866s; 4 X44 (Sebastien Loeb/Cristina Gutierrez) +27.914s; 5 Rosberg X Racing (Johan Kristoffersson/Molly Taylor) +1:01.005s

RACING REPORTS

Photos:Roy Dempster

KIRKISTOWN: 500MRCI LEINSTER TROPHY BY RICHARD YOUNG — AUGUST 27-28

MULLINS ADDS HIS NAME TO A FAMOUS ROSTER

The Leinster Trophy has been won by some pretty famous people during its 88-year history, future World champions Mike Hawthorn and Ayrton Senna to name but two.

Last Saturday the name of Sylvie Mullins was added to the list when the man from County Clare took his Gould-Judd over the line to score a dramatic victory on BOSS Ireland's first visit to Kirkistown in several years.

The drama came when early leader – and race-one winner – Paul O'Connell (Dallara GP2) spun out at the Hairpin just two laps from the finish while trying to beat Kirkistown's long-standing outright lap record.

The record, held by GP2 driver Philip Shields, has now stood since 2011 and remains intact however, while Mullins celebrates what is thought to be the first-ever race victory for the Gould marque.

Second place went to the unique Lola-Renault T96/50 of Jonathan Fildes, who had started from the back of the grid after missing qualifying. Third place went to the impressively driven F3 Dallara of Aaron Gaughran, ahead of the similar cars of Michael Roche and Noel Robinson.

This was only the second occasion in its history that the Leinster has been contested outside the Republic of Ireland but it proved to be a success and may well be repeated in future years .

Elsewhere in a packed programme, there were two wins for Jordan Dempsey in Formula Ford F1600. Both times he prevailed from Alan Davidson and Brandon McCaughan. The Leinster Motor Club's Goodyear Trophy was his reward, plus a healthy quota of Northern Ireland Championship points.

Anthony Cross also scored double wins in Formula Vee, his second victory earning him the Holmpatrick Trophy. The place men in this case were Jordan Kelly and Gavin Buckley in the first race, Buckley and Dan Polley in the second. All four drivers were in Sheanes.

Elsewhere, there were Fiesta wins for Neville Anderson and Keith Dawson and Saloon/GT victories for Alan Watkins and Charlie Linnane (both in SHP Wildcats). Another to double up was Jim Larkham in Roadsports in his Radical, with both victories in the concurrent Striker category going the way of the vastly experienced Michael Cullen from Roger Welaratne.

Sylvie Mullins will have his name on the same silverware at Senna and Hawthorn with the Leinster Trophy

Race one winner Paul O'Connell was out of luck in the main race for the trophy

RACE WINNERS

BOSS Ireland
Race 1: Paul O'Connell (3.5 Dallara GP2); **Race 2 for the Leinster Trophy):** Sylvie Mullins (4.0 Gould Judd GR37)

FF1600
Race 1: Jordan Dempsey (Van Diemen RF01); **Race 2 for the Goodyear Trophy:** Dempsey

Formula Vee
Race 1: Anthony Cross (Sheane FV94); **Race 2 for the Holmpatrick Trophy):** Cross

Saloon/GT
Race 1: Alan Watkins (2.0 SHP Wildcat); **Race 2:** Charlie Linnane (2.0 SHP Wildcat)

Roadsports
Races 1 & 2: Jim Larkham (1.3 Radical PR06)

Fiesta Zetec
Race 1: Neville Anderson; **Race 2** Keith Dawson

SNETTERTON: 2CV 24 HOURS BY PETER SCHERER — AUGUST 27-29

MINI CREW STEAL THE 2CV 24-HOUR THUNDER AT SNETTERTON

There was drama and more drama in the annual 2CV 24 hours at Snetterton last weekend.

The Mini Grand class dominated the opening hours, with only Pete Sparrow mixing it for Team 2CV Lion.

At the end of the first hour, the top five were all Minis with Alex Osborne leading the way for APO Sport, from Elliot Stafford for Team Toyshed and Misfits' Neven Kirkpatrick. Sparrow was sixth, well clear of a great three-car scrap for second in the 2CV Class.

2CV Lion continued to dominate the class with David O'Keeffe and Gary Adnitt sharing with Sparrow.

Most of the Minis had a spell in front but, at half distance, Sparrow had worked his way into the overall lead. But, only a few hours later, they were falling down the order after snapping the crankshaft.

The Minis were having trouble through Sunday morning too and when Darren Roberts looked a fairly safe leader for Slarky Malarkey before he was hit by Kris Tovey's Beacon Down 2CV after brake failure into Wilson.

Misfits then led until Kirkpatrick pitted from a 12-lap advantage as the gearbox broke.

Team Toyshed's Chris Slade was left to claim overall victory, but Sparrow climbed back up to win the 2CV Class after Crisis at Tete Rouge's Brian Heerey had pitted at around 0900hrs for an engine change.

Third overall went to APO Sport's Mini, with DD Motorsport's Nick Crispin and Crisis at Tete Rouge's Nick Roads completing the 2CV podium from fourth overall.

Slarky Malarky managed to repair their car and rejoin, to complete the Mini top-three finishers.

Ryan Polley's Honda Honda Civic Type R dominated a rain-affected Snetterton Saloons race.

Mark Havers' Seat Cupra TCR led the 30-car grid through Riches on the opening lap, but he soon gave best to Polley, though managed to retain second until the pitstops.

Polley was soon in command again to win by 9.7s, but Karl Cattliff's BMW M3 was closing slightly at the end.

Olly Elmer's Honda Civic Type R was in third place, with only Simon O'Donoghue's BMW M3 and Havers remaining on the lead lap.

The first of the Max5 races was a great duel between Jonathan Halliwell and Paul Roddison.

Halliwell led until Riches on lap seven, but a lap later Halliwell retook on the Bentley Straight and claimed the win.

With rain falling Roddison spun out of second at Coram on the last lap, promoting Ben Taylor's RX-8, while Roddison recovered in fourth.

It was a comfortable lights-to-flag win for Roddison in race two, with Taylor a clear third.

RACE WINNERS

2CV 24 Hours
Team Toyshed – Mini Grande: (Michael Dryden/Andy Slade/Chris Slade/ Elliot Stafford); **2CV Class winner:** Team 2CV Lion (Pete Sparrow/David O'Keeffe/Gary Adnitt)

Snetterton Saloons
Ryan Polley (Honda Civic Type R)

Max5
Race 1: Jonathan Halliwell (Mazda MX-5 Mk4); **Race 2:**Paul Roddison (Mazda MX-5 Mk34)

CADWELL PARK: BRSCC BY STEVE WHITFIELD — AUGUST 28-29

ALLWOOD TAKES A TRIO OF MAZDA WINS IN TENSE ENCOUNTERS

Oliver Allwood lit up the Mazda MX-5 Championship fight with three wins during BRSCC's Cadwell Park meeting.

Allwood finished ahead of team-mates Fraser Fenwick and Brian Trott in the opening exchange, and led from Fenwick again in race two. Brewer passed Foden at Park corner, before taking second at The Mountain after a mistake from Fenwick, who avoided losing further places after going off through Hall Bends.

Brewer gained over two seconds on Allwood in the closing stages, finishing just 0.3 seconds behind. Allwood dropped to third at the start of race three before reclaiming second from Foden. Oli Walden triggered a safety car period by crashing at Charlies bend, leading to a three-lap dash to the chequered flag. Allwood completed the treble after wrestling the lead away from Brewer on the penultimate lap at Gooseneck.

Title rivals Samuel Smith and Jack Harding took a win apiece in the Mazda MX-5 Supercup after close battles, while James Cossins triumphed in the partially reversed grid race by a small margin from Richard Amos and Harding.

Deagen Fairclough and Jensen Brickley continued their Fiesta Junior championship battle in race one, with Brickley taking the lead from his rival after a caution period. On the final lap, Fairclough pounced on a mistake from Brickley at the penultimate corner, but the pair collided exiting Barn. Despite both miraculously continuing, Jake Trigg beat the pair across the line to snatch victory.

Brickley served a race-two 10-place grid penalty for the incident, but retired with a driveshaft failure.Fairclough won a shortened encounter.

Zachary Lucas led the first of the senior Fiesta races, before a mistake at Charlies allowed Alastair Kellett through to take his first victory of the season.

Kellett doubled up with a lights-to-flag win in race two ahead of Smith and Lucas. Luke Pinder, who was plagued by a turbo issue all weekend, led the partially reversed grid race. But the result was declared null and void after fluid deposited by Ethen Rogers through Hall Bends caused chaos behind, with fellow ST150 runner Brianne Davis emerging unscathed after a heavy crash with the barriers.

RACE WINNERS

Fiesta Championship
Races 1 & 2: Alistair Kellett

Fiesta Junior
Race 1: Jake Trigg; **Race 2:** Deagan Fairclough

Mazda MX-5 Championship
Races 1, 2 & 3: Oliver Allwood

Mazda MX-5 Clubmam
Races 1 & 2: Kevin Dengate

MX-5 Supercup
Race 1: Samuel Smith; **Race 2:** Jack Harding; **Race 3:** James Cossins

ST-XR Challenge
Race 1: Lee Bowron (Ford Fiesta ST); **Race 2:** Simon Robinson (Ford Fiesta XR2); **Race 3:** Michael Blackburn (Ford Fiesta ST)

British Superkart Championship
Race 1: Lee Harpham (MS Kart); **Races 2 & 3:** Sam Moss (Anderson CSK)

BMW Compact Cup
Races 1 & 2: Steven Dailly

Track Attack Race Club
Races 1 & 2: Rich Hockley (Honda Civic)

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COLUMNIST

RUAIRI BELL

The 21-year-old Londoner explains his approach to this year's Junior BRC

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Parry (l) and Bell (r) won the Nicky Grist

The Grampian Rally proved to be a frustration

I live in London; a big city that doesn't usually produce many rally drivers. My trip to school used to consist of three trains and a bus, but I am a big fan of rallying which stems from my dad, Harvey, competing as a co-driver with Jim Harrison in the Irish Tarmac Championship in the early 2000s. I've always loved it. Well, I say that, but when I was a toddler, apparently I didn't like the noise of the cars and I used to cry. Luckily that's changed.

Dad and I had a bit of a role reversal when I was doing my A-levels because I wanted to focus on my books and it was my father who was saying 'never mind that, let's go rallying!' I wanted to get my grades and promised myself that if I got A* grades, that would give me the potential to get into a car.

I got 11 A* in my GCSEs and three in my A-levels, after which I said I'd take a gap year and if it worked, it worked... but if it didn't, I'd take up my deferred place at London School of Economics.

That allowed me in my own head to have the confidence to do something well that I desperately wanted to do. I figured that if I could do something well that I wasn't fussed about – namely studying – then applying the same ethos to something I was passionate about, has the prospect of being quite exciting.

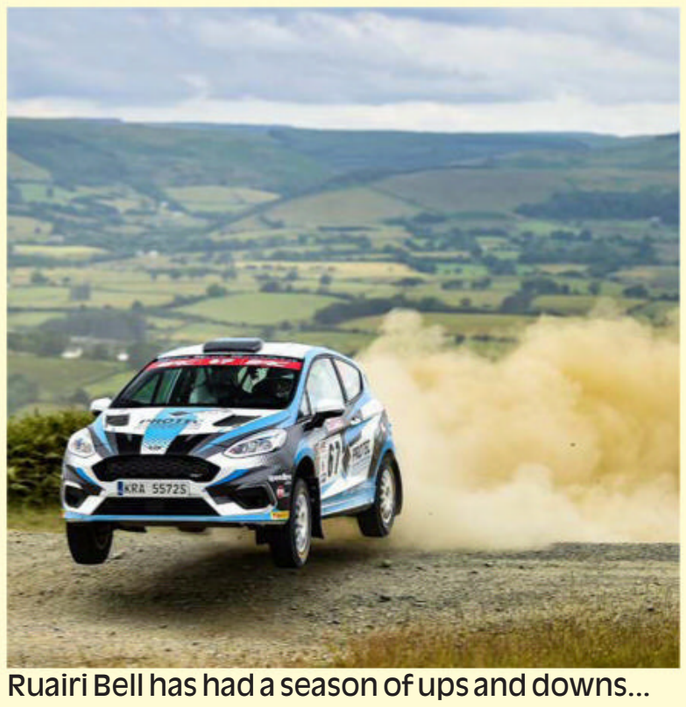
My first experience came in a little Nissan Micra in Junior 1000 events in Northern Ireland. Funnily enough my co-driver back then, Liam Regan, now sits alongside my Junior BRC rival William Creighton this year. That was my GCSE year, so then I focused on school and just did a few rallies getting experience in different cars before 2019 when I did the Junior British Rally Championship and the Peugeot Rally Cup Iberica in Portugal and Spain.

There's two ways in which young drivers can go. You can be one of those guys who is flat out everywhere and crashes are not an uncommon theme, or keep it on the road building up slowly. I preferred the latter as I viewed it as a waste of budget throwing money at repairing cars instead of doing more events to learn as much as I could.

My school sponsored me early on, and I put a plan together myself to build a foundation in the form of a portfolio of information, knowledge and experience.

Winning the M-Sport scholarship to get the Junior WRC drive for 2020 made me aware that my experience was a long way short of the guys who were already competing. But that was true in Spain and Portugal, and the same way it is this year on the BRC: you're going up against guys who know these events so well and it's a great measure for yourself as a driver.

Early on I wanted to get beaten by the very best drivers so that I could quickly understand how they were so good and use that to learn a lot faster. I've worked to gain an understanding of the often overlooked and simple things, like what a tyre can really do, or what a damper can really do, finding that last little bit of performance and working out how to string it all together. So those first stages on the JWRC in Sweden weren't disheartening, it was a measure to find those little gains and overall, it's working pretty well.



Ruairi Bell has had a season of ups and downs...

What I love about rallying is the way that everything changes all the time. Different types of gravel rally, different characteristics of Tarmac from one event to the next.

This year for me is about narrowing the margins and spending as much time in the car as possible – although I haven't managed much time in the car up to now – and having the most stage wins in the Junior BRC so far this year is a good place to be.

It also gives me a bit of space to plan the next step, which is going to be something exciting and intriguing. I'm really looking forward to it and I'm very excited about where the sport is going and what role I might have in it. I'm working with some fantastic people, great partners to develop our plans for this year and next, and to build the confidence in terms of our pace. I feel it's important to be surrounded by positive attitudes that inspire confidence in myself, because, confidence drives.

The British Rally Championship this year has been equally positive and frustrating. Winning the Nicky Grist Stages by over a minute was definitely one of those positives. Losing my electrics when we were 27-odd seconds in front on the Grampian was not a great day. Oulton Park with a car that we just literally finished building wasn't ideal. But everybody's had problems, the toys aren't out of the pram yet, we still have four rounds left.

Ultimately, I'm in the fortunate position of doing something I'm passionate about. Even the stressful parts are exciting. I'm surrounded by the sport that I love, and we have the most amazing fans who come out in swathes to cheer us on, Covid permitting. It's just a fantastic sport to be part of and even if it all goes wrong, I will still be out there as a fan.

'The British Rally Championship season has been equally positive and frustrating'

WHAT'S ON

YOUTUBE

The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there. And, in a grand demonstration of the point, 65 years ago today we had a Formula 1 act that seems unthinkable to the modern age.

The man in question was Peter Collins. Going into 1956's Italian Grand Prix season closer at Monza to get the crown he needed to win plus Ferrari team-mate Juan Manuel Fangio to not score. And this scenario looked like it could come to pass, as Fangio pulled into the pits with a broken steering arm while Collins moved up to third place. But when Collins came in for a pitstop of his own, seeing Fangio standing in the pits he, without being asked, dismounted to give his car to his revered stablemate.

And YouTube offers us a glimpse of this finale race, from British Pathe's report. It is fleeting, only 72 seconds, but it sums up the story plus provides fantastic footage of a fervent Italian Grand Prix when Monza was a monster: no chicanes and featuring the fearsome banking. And the narrator notes Collins' was a "sacrifice which will go down in racing history". You can watch it at: youtube.com/watch?v=53QNzZ8h_Ns or by searching 'Monza Italy (1956)'.

Graham Keilloh

Collins handed car to Fangio

TV GUIDE

After a mere 36 years away Formula 1 this weekend returns to the Netherlands and Zandvoort, and Sky Sports F1 is in appropriately familiar mood. It kicks off its F1 weekend coverage today in its usual way: the weekend preview F1 Show is at 1700hrs-1800hrs, followed immediately by the drivers' press conference at 1800hrs-1930hrs.

The channel supplements its live coverage with some Ted Kravitz notebooks, with his qualifying rumination at 1600hrs-1630hrs on Saturday and his race equivalent at 1700hrs-1730hrs on Sunday. Both as usual are also repeated plenty.

Channel 4's Zandvoort qualifying highlights meanwhile are at 1800hrs-1930hrs on Saturday and its race highlights are on Sunday at 1830hrs-2100hrs.

You can catch up with last weekend's Thruxton British Touring Car Championship triple-header on ITV4 on Saturday at 1145hrs-1325hrs.

Le Mans is on Eurosport

You can also watch this weekend's GT World Challenge action from the Nurburgring on Monday evening on Sky Sports F1 (2200hrs-0000hrs).

There's an hour from the recent Le Mans 24 Hour race shown on Eurosport 2 today at 1000hrs-1105hrs, and it's shown again twice tomorrow. Similarly, Michelin Le Mans Cup highlights are on today at 1500hrs-1530hrs on BT Sport 3, and that's also repeated tomorrow.

Graham Keilloh

LIVE TV

FORMULA 1 DUTCH GRAND PRIX ZANDVOORT
Practice 1: Friday, 1000hrs-1145hrs, Sky Sports F1
Practice 2: Friday, 1345hrs-1530hrs, Sky Sports F1
Practice 3: Saturday, 1045hrs-1210hrs, Sky Sports F1
Qualifying: Saturday, 1300hrs-1530hrs, Sky Sports F1
Race: Sunday, 1230hrs-1700hrs, Sky Sports F1

FIA FORMULA 3 ZANDVOORT
Practice: Friday, 0905hrs-0950hrs, Sky Sports F1
Qualifying: Friday, 1245hrs-1325hrs, Sky Sports F1
Sprint race 1: Saturday, 0925hrs-1025hrs, Sky Sports F1
Sprint race 2: Saturday, 1645hrs-1745hrs, Sky Sports F1
Feature race: Sunday, 0935hrs-1035hrs, Sky Sports F1

W SERIES ZANDVOORT
Race: Saturday, 1500hrs-1620hrs, Channel 4

PORSCHE SUPERCUP ZANDVOORT
Race: Sunday, 1100hrs-1150hrs, Sky Sports F1

WORLD RALLYCROSS WORLD RX OF FRANCE LOHEAC
Semi-final and Final: Sunday, 1600hrs-1700hrs, BT Sport 2

DTM RED BULL RING
Qualifying 1: Saturday, 0930hrs-1015hrs, BT Sport 3
Race 1: Saturday, 1215hrs-1400hrs, BT Sport 3
Qualifying 2: Sunday, 0930hrs-1015hrs, BT Sport 2
Race 2: Sunday, 1215hrs-1400hrs, BT Sport 2

DTM TROPHY RED BULL RING
Race 1: Saturday, 1400hrs-1500hrs, BT Sport 3
Race 2: Sunday, 1400hrs-1500hrs, BT Sport 2

NASCAR DARLINGTON
Race: Sunday, 2230hrs-0330hrs, Premier Sports 2

LISTINGS

SATURDAY
Oulton Park, Cheshire
750MC meeting: BMW Car Club, F1000, Locost, Bikesports, Ma7da, Classic Stock Hatch, Hot Hatch **Starts** racing from 1050hrs (qualifying from 0830hrs) **Admission** adult £14, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

SATURDAY/SUNDAY
Croft, N Yorks
BRSCC meeting: Caterham Seven 310R, Caterham Seven 270R, Caterham Roadsport, Caterham Academy, CityCar Cup, Fun Cup **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1120hrs (qualifying from 0930hrs) Sunday, racing from 1325hrs (qualifying from 1200hrs) **Admission** adult £15, under 15 free **Web** croftcircuit.co.uk **Contact** 01325 721815

SUNDAY
Brands Hatch, Kent
Festival of Porsche: Porsche Club, Porsche 911, Boxster Cup **Starts** racing from 1335hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs) **Admission** adult £30, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000.

Details correct at time of going to press. Please check with individual organisers.

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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!

Lotus tackles the Championship Challenge at Shelsley Walsh

Rapid Toyota, from Justin Ward

Atmosphere, by David Harbey

Flying Renault Clio, by Sam Nudd

Alex Ireland's BTCC Knockhill pic

NEXT WEEK — OUT THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

**Correct at time of going to press*

FORMULA 1 GOES DUTCH – AGAIN

How will the grand prix racers take to the new-look Zandvoort?

BRISCA F1'S BIGGEST MEETING OF 2021

We look ahead to the stock cars' World Final

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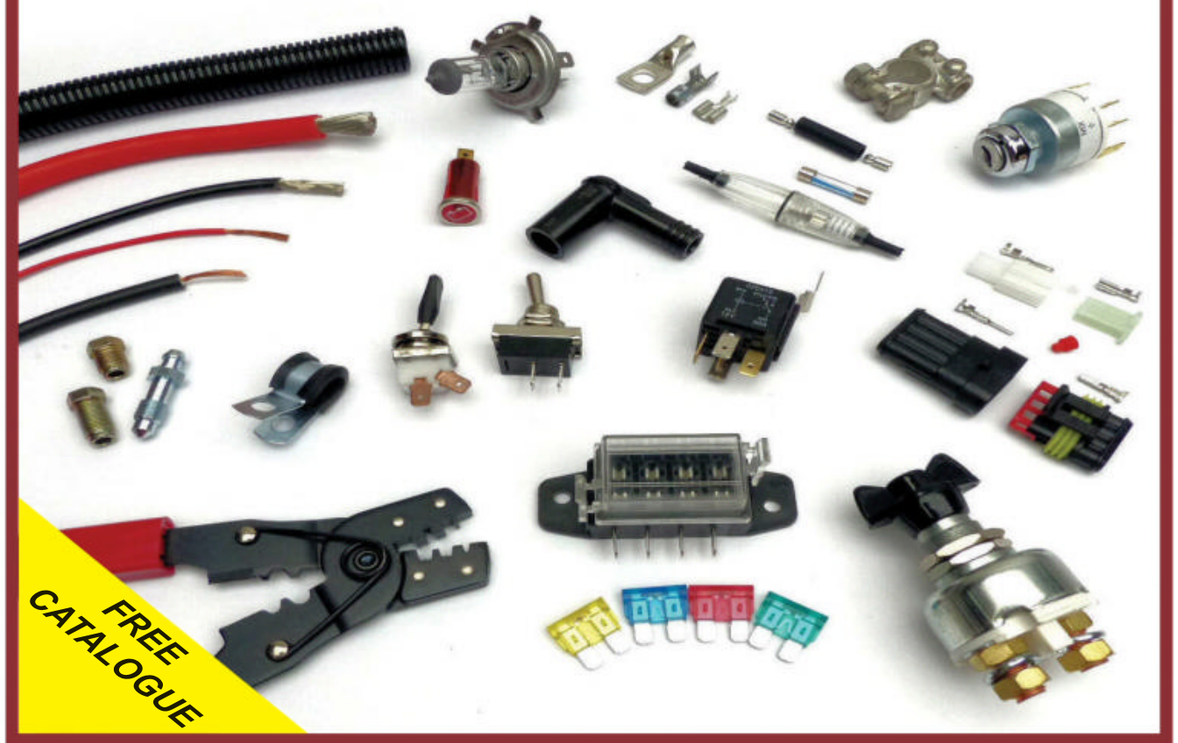

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1986, 83000 miles, £24,000. 928 S2. Finished in Silver Metallic (936) paintwork with contrasting dark blue/white pinstripe velour and leather seats. Featuring 16" GTS style alloy wheels with Porsche crests, 6-way electric front seats, electric windows and mirrors. Please call 07577 575770, South East. (T)
109634

PORSCHE 996

2001, 76326 miles, £20,995. Porsche 996 Carrera 4 Cabriolet. Lapis Blue, with Savannah trim. With factory hardtop. 15 Service stamps with recent service work carried out by Porsche specialists, Zentrum. Upgrades include, IMS Bearing with ceramic upgrade dual row in 2017, Air Con, Cruise Control, Media screen, Twist Cup wheels, etc. Please call 01636812700, East Midlands.
109445

PORSCHE BOXSTER

2012, 66000 miles, £34,995. This Porsche Boxster S 981 series is fitted with the desirable PDK 7 speed gearbox. Finished in Rhodium Silver metallic paintwork with a contrasting black leather interior, this Boxster S presents in superb order throughout. Appointed with a high level of standard equipment this 981 Boxster will offer its lucky new owner a specification of electrically adjustable and heated seats for driver and passenger. Please call 07577 575770, South East. (T)
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PORSCHE CARRERA GT

2008, 60000 miles, £26,995. An outstanding Porsche Carrera. The body having recently benefited from a ceramic coating by PPK. Porsche Dynamic Driving Pack. Porsche Media Pack. Air Con. Black Alcantara Special order roof lining. Porsche Factory alloys. Winter and summer tyres. Just had ceramic coating and paint protection. Full service and MOT just undertaken. Please call 01274 585803, Yorkshire and the Humber. (T)
109630

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